

Employability and Career Identity
Chilean male middle-aged middle managers' narratives of career

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Declaration

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, in compliance with the regulations of the University of Edinburgh, I certify that the author of this study is the undersigned and it has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

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Abstract

The dynamism and unpredictability of current social and economic conditions present a particular challenge for mature workers who tend to consider work as one of the main sources of their identity. The challenge is perhaps even more profound for those, such as managers, who are expected to be active agents in managing their own careers.

The relationship between the self and organisations in the changing work context is the main focus of this study. The concept of career identity is explored and its relationship with employability discussed in light of evidence from a study of middle-aged, middle managers in three industries in Chile.

A mixed methods approach commenced with an initial mapping of the objective aspects of career by means of a questionnaire survey. This was followed by interviews using a narrative approach which allowed access to the sensemaking process individuals develop to construct and inform their identities at work.

The findings indicate that Chilean middle-aged middle managers' careers tend to unfold in single organisational settings, with high tenure and low expected mobility. Age and mobility are related to both perception of employability and the attitudes and behaviours leading to employability. Mature workers with stable careers appear less employable than younger and more mobile workers. The dominant narrative or 'career script' in the population studied, is the traditional one that stresses notions of continuity and progression in a more or less predictable sequence of stages leading to positions with higher status and social recognition.

In this study, career identity is conceptualised as a dynamic aggregate of descriptors that individuals ascribed to themselves at work. A complex identity that includes a large set of characteristics, a variety of future possible selves and different objects of identification in a flexible interplay, closer to personal identities and to processes rather than to groups, seems to be a key antecedent of the career behaviour leading to

employability. Work history, specifically diversity of work experience and social connections, plays a significant role in complexity of career identity.

Since participants tend to stress collective values, work stability and the membership to social groups, such as industries and firms, there might be a risk of narrow career identity, reduced mobility real and expected, and low employability. However, a new notion of career is just emerging which decouple identity from organisations and promote independence in the labour market.

A typology of four career stories was constructed, which depicts a particular configuration of career identity and sensemaking of careers. Their implications in career behaviour are explored.

Current work conditions open up new opportunities to exercise choice, however, in the light of the current findings they might imply also lack of references and sense of insecurity for an important group of the working population. The potential implications of these findings for middle-aged workers' employability are explored and propositions for both theory and practice are suggested.

Introduction

A progressively more competitive environment and the associated requirements for a more highly skilled workforce with greater flexibility have been signed as the leading forces in the knowledge economy. These conditions place employability as a key imperative for governments, employers and employees.

The traditional ways in which careers have unfolded are vanishing: individuals are considered as being empowered through greater choices and more independence in the labour market. However, this freedom can also bring isolation and insecurity or at least make more difficult the process of negotiating identity in and/or through one's employment.

In this study, career identity and employability are identified as the key concepts in this process. A complex construct, employability has been addressed hitherto mainly from social and economic perspectives, emphasising the development of qualifications in the most disadvantaged groups of the working population. However, employability can be also analysed using approaches drawn from psychology and social psychology which emphasise individual experiences and the person-centred variables involved.

In this context, career identity is conceptualised as encompassing those characteristics that people ascribe to themselves, derived from the sense-making process of personal experiences at work as well as from the identification with relevant social groups.

Chile, where the empirical research took place, is facing the challenges of becoming a developed country. It is a socially and politically stable nation and as a pioneer of economic growth in Latin America, it is in a privileged position. Requirements of a more highly qualified workforce, the need to increase women's and older workers'

participation in the work force are among the challenges that will allow Chile to sustain recent developments and radical transformations in the structure of the labour market. The population addressed in this research are however male, middle-aged, middle managers in the three main sectors of industry in the region VIII in Chile: Forestry, Manufacturing and Fishing. Due to the specific economic conditions of the region this group and the sectors analysed are regarded as increasingly affected by the transformations in the labour market.

The research focuses on the analysis of work history through career patterns, the configuration and the evolution of career identity and the process of making sense of experiences along the entire career. The relationship between these factors and employability is investigated. If perception of employability is influenced by career history it is important to understand what the variables involved are. This research assumes that identity in the career context plays a key role, affects how careers unfold and therefore impacts on perceived employability. However, there is scant research evidence to date regarding as to how this process takes place.

The mixed methods approach was chosen as a means to combine an initial view of career mobility variables, employability measures and social identification, to thereafter address in more depth career identity using the narrative approach. Narrative accounts of careers capture notions of continuity and change, characteristic of careers and proved to be a useful method in the comprehension of the interaction between career identity and perceived employability. The narrative view of careers also includes the notion of people projecting themselves into the future, so possible selves emerge as aspects that can help in understanding career behaviour. Careers stories also allow access to accounts of the social and cultural influences in the development of individuals' careers.

The interest in this topic derives from my career as an occupational psychology working for more than 12 years as an academic at the University of Concepción and in consultancy for diverse companies in the region VIII. My experience has made me aware of the relevance of work as shaping individuals' lives in a number of

important ways and often defining who one is. As a consultant in recruitment and selection I perceived the sense of vulnerability of many mature workers and the need to offer them career guidance at earlier stages in life. Also, there is a need for knowledge that supports organisational practices that contribute to a valued relationship between employers and employees.

The thesis introduced here informs the research process developed, including the main theoretical approaches, previous research findings and the methodological perspective used to address the research questions.

The first chapter presents the broad context and local conditions that have led to the research interests. The knowledge-based economy and its influence and projected impact in the structure of the labour markets and demands for the workforce are introduced. Thereafter, an overview of Chile is provided and an analysis of the Chilean and particularly, region VIII's economic and social situation is presented. The chapter ends with a detailed description of the population that is the focus of this research, that is, middle-age middle managers from three particular sectors of the economy in the region. Theoretical formulations and empirical findings regarding this group provide an overall characterization and overview of their projected employability.

Chapter II presents a description of the main theoretical developments and research findings on the topic of employability to date. The evolution of the concept, the dominant approaches and configuration described in the literature are described. Finally, the approach adopted in this research and the main theoretical framework used is introduced.

Having in mind the wide context in which employability is developed, this research addresses the concept from the individual point of view. Perception of employability and the psychological factors involved are the main focus of this study and they are analysed through the personal processes of configuring and making sense of individuals' careers. In order to understand this processes chapter III concentrates on

the employment relationship and the psychological contracts involved as well as the traditional and emergent ways in which careers unfold in both objective (e.g. patterns of mobility) and subjective (e.g. agency and career adjustment) terms.

Chapter IV develops notions of identity at work and the theoretical formulations from psychology and social psychology from which the configuration of the concept was drawn from. Social identification processes and the self in future states are introduced and some empirical findings on the relationship between careers and identity are presented.

Chapter V addresses the contribution of the narrative mode in the comprehension and study of identity as well as careers. Narrative construction of identity and the notion of career stories are amongst the main focal points of this chapter.

The last chapter of the theoretical framework (Chapter VI) attempts to provide an overview of the literature in order to delineate the relationship between career identity and employability. Issues of identity change in the context of work and the conditions that lead to it are described.

Chapter VII describes the methodology and the research design. It presents the purposes of the study and the research questions together with the methodological approach adopted, the methods and instruments employed and the stages in the process of data collection and analysis.

Chapter VIII presents the quantitative analysis and findings from biographical data, measures of employability and social identification. Some key relationships were explored and the findings set the stage to the next phase of analysis. The qualitative analysis and findings are described in Chapters IX and X, the former explores meanings of careers and the latter focuses on career identity. Both chapters are based on the analysis of participants' narrative accounts of careers.

Chapter X presents the discussion of the main findings and its relationship with previous researches and theoretical formulations. Finally, conclusions are described in the chapter XI. It includes the strengths and limitations of the study, areas of future research and the implications of the study for theory and practice.

I

Context

Globalization, technological developments and the emergence of the knowledge-based society are amongst the conditions leading to the current interest in employability. These phenomena impact economic conditions, the social structure and cultural experiences in the societies in a way that transcends social aspects of life to reach more personal experiences in a variety of realms. This chapter presents some of these conditions emphasizing the experience of Chile in its transition into a knowledge-based economy. To begin, a wide context is described and some tendencies in the international labour market are presented. It includes description and statistics regarding changes in working conditions, structural characterization of the labour market and new demands for skills.

The second part of this chapter depicts the main characteristics of Chilean's current social and economic situation. Educational data, employment statistics and labour market trends are presented. The section ends with a description of the region where the empirical research took place.

Finally, an overview of the main aspects of the research design and methodology is presented.

1.1 The social and economic context

The variety of changes experienced worldwide shows a tendency into what has been called the knowledge-based economy. In the knowledge-based economy the driven forces of development are placed on intangible assets based on knowledge. Generation and diffusion of information receive increasing attention and technology and innovation become the leading forces of economic growth.

One of the clearest manifestations of the knowledge economy is the increased demand for more educated workers (Stewart, 1997). In addition, the speed of change in the new economy means rapid depreciation of competencies and an increasing demand for new and more complex skills (OECD, 2001; 2005a)

Consequences of these and related trends include transformation of the structure of the labour market, for example, the change in the sectoral composition of employment. International statistics show a decline in employment in primary and manufacturing industries and a growth in employment in service industries (OECD, 2005a; Meller, 2005). In OECD countries (a grouping which Chile has joined recently), the services sector accounts for over 70 percent of total employment and value added and also for almost all employment growth, mainly as a result of the development of telecommunications, transport, wholesale and retail trade and finances (OECD, 2005a). Recent research in the Chilean context shows the same trend (Meller, 2005).

The emergence of the service sector as dominant in the new economy is reflected in demands on the workforce and in terms of new organisational practices. Case studies regarding the determinant of success in the services sector highlight work organisation and human resource management roles. Since the services sector highly relies on the skills of workers, education and training play key roles in helping people to adapt to new requirements. The OECD reports that moving to a more competitive and open services sector has increased innovation and technology use, fosters the creation of new employment options and stimulates entrepreneurial opportunities (OECD, 2005a).

The increasing professionalisation of the labour force in this context has been extensively described (Bertrand, 1994; OECD, 2005b) and there is evidence of an increase in the number of those doing intellectual work and of technical specialists, to the detriment of the least skilled. As an example, in the period between 1995-2001 the bulk of new jobs created in the EU was concentrated in the high tech (almost 20 percent) and the knowledge-intensive service sectors (70 percent) (European

Commission, 2003). In addition, a World Bank report (2003) indicates that where new technologies have been introduced, demands for high-skilled workers, particularly high-skilled information and communication technology (ICT) workers, have increased. Also, evidence suggests that those who are more highly educated are more likely to participate in the utilization and creation of knowledge and become 'knowledge workers' (Stewart, 1999).

Recent data from OECD countries indicate that high skills industries and high and medium-high technology manufacturing and some services feature comparatively high proportions of adults at the maximum levels of the skills measured in the Adult Literacy Survey (OECD, 2005b). At the same time, the type of occupations typical from the old industrial economy, such as low-skill services and goods-related types of jobs, employ a limited proportion of workers with medium or high levels of skills (OECD, 2005b, p. 131). Thus, the knowledge-based economy has also promoted some radical changes in the occupational structure of employment.

There is, however, not only a growing demand for skills but also for diversified competencies. Although there is no agreement about what the competencies required in the knowledge economy are, there is consensus that they are more broadly-based rather than narrowly vocational. The core skills based on formal education are no longer enough, with non-academic skills being regarded as a fundamental part in the new economy (Bertrand, 1994; OECD, 2001).

In addition, new conditions mean that skills depreciate much more rapidly than they did in the past. Several international bodies have stressed the importance of continued upskilling and lifelong learning as key in preparing workers for competing in the global economy (World Bank, 2003). Workers need to be able to upgrade their skills on a continuing basis and consequently new risks of social exclusion involve workers who are not able to keep up with this pace of change. In this context, older workers are a group in a vulnerable situation. There is evidence that they face difficulties keeping their jobs (OECD, 2006) and employers tend to have negative perceptions about the capacities of older workers to adapt to technological and

organisational change and such workers therefore do not receive much help in upgrading their skills. In the European Commission report on the social situation in the European Union, it was stated that older people are less likely to receive training than younger people (European Commission, 2003). OECD reports that incidences of training in all OECD countries declines with age, which partly reflects shorter expected pay-back periods on investment in training of older workers (OECD, 2006).

Aging in the working population is one of the demographic changes that has had a progressively stronger impact on economies throughout the world, specifically on the dynamics of the workforce. Prolonged working life, attributable to increased life expectancy, means a decline in the share of the prime working-age population (OECD, 2006). In addition, it is expected that the number of workers retiring from the work force will increase and eventually exceed the number of new labour markets entrants (OECD, 2006). Statistics indicate in 2001, 38.5 percent of the EU population between 55 and 64 were in employment and the average age for men exiting the labour force was 60.5 year old (European Commission, 2003). As a result, there is a risk of losing active workforce and a clear need to increase the participation rate of adult workers in the labour market, especially in Europe and developed countries. EU policy makers recognize the challenge and in the Stockholm Council, 2002 established a target of employment rate of 50 percent for the 55 and 64 age group by 2010 (Commission of the European Communities, 2004).

The same situation is described in the OECD countries. Despite showing an increase in labour force participation of older workers (those aged 55 and older) during the period 1994-2004, most countries' employment rates for this group remain low (OECD, 2006). In 2004 less than 60 percent of the population aged 50-64 had a job in the OECD countries, compared to 76 percent for the age group 24-49. As a result, the aging process in work population can be translated in new demands on middle-aged workers who will be expected to remain longer in the work force.

Changes in the industrial structure of the labour market have also had implications for gender and status in employment. The employment rate for women has increased

significantly throughout the world. Statistics indicate that female participation relative to that of prime-aged men kept increasing and the prime-age unemployment rate of women fell in most OECD countries during that period from 1994 to 2004 (OECD, 2006). In the UK, recent trends have tended to benefit females rather than males due to job losses in primary and manufacturing sectors accounted for by males (Green, 2003) and high employment in services being closely related to employment for women (OECD, 2005a). It is expected that in the future with more part time jobs, more flexible work arrangements and an increase in development and expansion of the service sector, there will be more job options for women.

In addition, changes in work conditions have had a strong impact on the dynamic of the labour market. Over recent years there has been a growth in flexible working arrangements, including temporary working and fixed-term contracts. Temporary jobs, in which workers hold contracts with a specified time of expiry (fixed-term contracts and temporary agency work) increased in the countries of the EU. As a percentage of total employment, fixed term contracts increase from 9.2 in 1991 to 11.4 in 2002 (Auer and Cazes, 2003). From 1994-2004, the involuntary part-time work in OECD countries declined slightly and temporary employment increased (OECD, 2006). Also, there is a trend for greater growth of opportunities for part-time employment as opposed to full-time employment.

In short, the emergence of a knowledge-based economy and the speed of technological development interact directly with changes in the structural composition of the labour market and work arrangements generating a new set of demands for the labour force. In this context, employability is becoming increasingly important. Where the knowledge-based industries are expanding rapidly, labour markets demands are changing accordingly which means new challenges for workers in order for them to remain active agents in the work force. The emergence of multifaceted services and the continued growth in the high technology sector rely heavily on personal abilities and knowledge leading to great pressure for workers to upgrade their skills on a continuous basis. This requires a new approach to learning, lifelong learning being a key strategy which involves different actors but also place

greater demands on the individuals themselves. In addition, higher mobility between sectors can be predicted and workers could be forced to move across sectors in order to remain in the labour market which might involve important adjustments for some people.

It is possible to conclude that the knowledge-based economy is creating great challenges and opportunities but at the same time it means risks for some groups. Young and older workers, women and disabled were among those traditionally affected in an industrial-based economy, trend that is expected to continue in the future. Employability in this context is considered one of the main priorities on the international agenda. The Commission of the European Communities has declared employability as one of its areas of action (European Commission, 2005) and there are initiatives in South America oriented to harmonize the relationship between the work force and the demands of the labour market (Fundación Chile, 2006; Chilecalifica, 2006). However, these programs tend to focus on less privileged groups such as youngsters and low skilled workers, for other groups employability remains largely a personal matter.

The Chilean case is an example of a young economy which in the medium term is forecast to face the challenges of the transition of a knowledge-based economy.

1.2 The Chilean Context

Chile has experienced important political, social and economic changes during the last three decades and there has been some important success in recent years that has been prompted by the transition process to become a developed country. Chile's sustained growth in the economy places it as a pioneer in economic development among the middle-income South-American countries. However, many issues remain unsolved and different challenges are expected.

Traditionally, Chilean economy has been heavily based on natural resources (mining, agribusiness, forestry and fishing). It is bi-polar since there is a large number of low

productivity small business that provide most of the formal sector employment, together with larger and more capital intensive business that provide most of the output and value added.

What follows is a presentation of the Chilean social and economic data and the main features of the Region VIII where this research has been carried out.

Data from the census 2002 (Mideplan, 2003a) indicate that the Chilean population totals 15,116,435 people, with the number of women slightly higher than men.

According to age, 25.7 percent of the population is 15 years old or less. In the last census (2002) there was a decrease in the youngest age group in favour of older people (aged 60 and more) compared to the previous census in 1992.

The literacy rate of the population was 96 percent in 2003, being 96.3 percent in male and 95.8 percent in female groups. These rates decrease in case of the rural population, with 88.9 percent male and 87.7 percent female (Mideplan, 2003a). In the same year the adult population reached an average of 10.1 years of schooling, being 10.3 years for male and 10.1 years for female. From 1990 to 2003 the schooling years increased in all age groups, being highly significant in the group aged from 45 to 54 years, whose schooling grew from 7.9 years to 9.9 years in that period (Mideplan, 2003a). The allocation of human capital is related to income, the poorer group reaching 7.8 years of schooling compared with 13.1 years of the higher income group.

Qualitative measures of human capital show that less than 20 percent of the adult population of Chile performed adequately in all three skill areas measured by the Adult Literacy Survey, below Portugal, Poland and Slovenia (OECD, 2000).

One strong indicator for the transition to a knowledge-based economy is the diffusion of information and communication technologies used. In industrial countries technology and economic growth are strongly correlated (World Bank, 2003). In Chile the investment in information technology has shown some progress.

Regarding access to ICT, Mideplan (2003b) reports that the 46.3 percent of the population older than five years has access to a computer, a quantity that reaches 72 percent in the population aged between 6 and 20 years and 32.8 percent in the case of people aged between 45 and 64 years. Also, 25.3 percent of the household have a computer, however there is an important gap between the richest and poorest. In the former group three out of four have access to a computer and in the later only one out of four. Regarding the access to internet, 29.1 percent of the population over five years old have access to internet and 12.6 percent of the Chilean houses have an internet connection (Mideplan, 2003b). Education support innovation and the diffusion of technology, not only facilitates learning and communication but also increases the ability to deal creatively with change (World Bank, 2003).

However, Chilean human capital and its quality still seem to be inadequate to cope with the requirements of the new economy. There are problems with insufficient coverage in education, access to tertiary education is inequitable and the quality of education has not reached international standards (OECD, 2005b). However, there are some initiatives oriented to gather efforts from different Chilean actors to increase educational levels and to develop social progress. Education and specifically the lifelong learning strategy had been considered a key aspect of coping with these challenges and one example is the program of continuing education, Chile Califica, supported by the Ministries of Education, Labour and Economy, whose main aims are to expand chances of general education in individuals without the minimum years of schooling; to improve the quality, coverage and pertinence of technical education; and to facilitate continuing learning offering people flexible chances of education, certification of competencies and an information system (Chile Califica, 2006).

Employment statistics for Chile indicate a workforce of 6,946,380 persons during the term February-April 2007 (INE, 2007). The rate of participation in the labour market was 57.3 percent in 2006. The participation rate of females increased from 39.8 percent in 2000 to 43.2 percent in 2006, when more than 300,000 women entered the labour force (Mideplan, 2006). In fact, female participation in the labour force is

highly dynamic since the expansion of the workforce has been due to an increase in the female working population.

The total unemployment rate for Chile was 6.8 percent in the term February-April, 2007. It was 5.7 percent in the case of male population and 8.9 percent for female group (INE, 2007).

Changes experienced in the Chilean labour market and employment show almost the same pattern as those of the US and Europe. Data collected present an accelerated growth of jobs in the tertiary sector and a decrease in industrial, agricultural and extractive occupations. In 2005 the net generation of employment was 173,000 new jobs. The service sector contributed with 192,300 net jobs, with relevant increase in social and personal services, finances and retail. The biggest loss was in manufacturing, agricultural and mining industries. Between 1997 and 2005 the manufacturing sector lost 83,000 jobs, mining 18,000 and agriculture 17,000 (Reinecke and Velasco, 2006).

Evolution and projections of the sectoral composition of the labour market indicates that in 1960 agriculture employed almost 30 percent of the total workforce, that amount being reduced to 20 percent in 1980, to 15 percent in 1997 and projected to reach 11 percent in 2010. The capital intensive services will however increase their relative importance over the time. In 1960 the percentage of services was 6 percent, 13 percent in 1997 and an 18 percent is projected by 2010; the work intensive service sector showed an important growth between 1960 and 1980 and is supposed to reach to 28 percent in 2010, creating 35 percent of new jobs; the capital intensive service sector is the second most important source for creating employment and this sector will create 25 percent of the total number of new jobs of the period (Meller, 2005).

The Chilean labour market is described as highly dynamic due to high rates of destruction and creation of employment which results in a high proportion of involuntary job change (Reinecke and Velasco, 2006). In 2003 the 75 percent of the working population had a permanent position in the labour market and the 11 percent

had temporary contracts. Other groups correspond to workers with occasional employment (6.5 percent) and fixed contracts (5.4 percent). These figures present a high level of heterogeneity regarding economic sectors, but no significant difference between the male and female populations (Mideplan, 2004).

According to international comparison of the average tenure in employment, Chile is one of the countries with higher mobility (Auer, Berg and Coulibaly, 2004; OIT, 2005). However, there are important differences in tenure regarding educational attainment, training and income. Low skilled workers show a higher number of involuntary movements than skilled workers. Also, workers with higher educational qualifications tend to change jobs in search of better options. The percentage of workers with permanent employment varies significantly according to income levels. In the richest group permanent employment reaches 90 percent, in the poorest 53 percent (Mideplán, 2004). In addition, workers who have recently participated in training have higher rates of voluntary job change which is not the case of low skilled workers (Mideplán, 2004). Mobility in low income and low skilled workers is a non-voluntary condition closely associated to vulnerability in employment.

The information presented above depicts the degree of segmentation in Chilean labour market. The sociological approach, in opposition to the purely economic, integrates social variables in the analysis of the functioning of the labour market and divides it in two different segments, primary and secondary, which differ in terms of patterns of mobility and quality of jobs. The primary labour market offers positions with relatively high salaries, good work conditions, good possibilities of advancement and stability in employment. In the secondary labour market, jobs tend to receive low wages, have poor work conditions, instability and high turnover (Henríquez and Uribe-Echavarría, 2004).

1.3 The Region VIII of Bio Bio - Chile

Region VIII is one of the 13 regions to which the country is politically and administratively divided. It is the fifth smallest region of the country. From 1992 to 2002 its population grew 7.3 percent, six points lower than the average growth of

Chile. In 2002, a total of 1,861,562 people lived in the region representing 12 percent of national population (INE, 2007). The rate of urban population is 85 percent, slightly lower than the national rate of 86.6 percent.

The region shows a rate of literacy of 93.7 percent and an illiterate population of 6.3 percent with no significant differences by gender. The average years of schooling for this population was 9.5 in 2003, lower than the national average of 10.2 years (Mideplan 2003a).

Manufacturing is the dominant industry in the region, followed by the services sector. The share of the GDP by sector shows that the secondary sector is the most important (45.9 percent). However, between 1991 and 2001 the region showed a marked development on the tertiary sector (services, retail and transport) which increased its participation in the GDP reaching 42.9 percent in 2002 and a reduction in the primary sector with 11.2 percent in the same year. The regional growth index is lower than the national growth index but regional exportation level is higher than the national one (Chilecalifica, 2005).

Employment data from February to April 2007 indicate that there were 1,514,000 people of working age, of which 760,290 were in the workforce. The employed group reached 652,760 persons; the number of unemployed was 52,070 and those who looked for jobs for the first time totalled 12,460. The population out of the workforce (students, people with disabilities, retirees, housewives) totalled 753,710 people (INE, 2007). The employment rate in the region reached almost 50 percent. There is a gender gap since two thirds of the population in the work force are male. However women's participation in the labour force has increased more than men's.

The region's unemployment rate from February-April 2007 was 8.5 percent. Data from 1996 until present show that the unemployment figures of the region have been higher than the national one. The average length of unemployment periods in 2000 was 17.1 weeks. Female unemployment rates were higher than males and the chance to be unemployed is higher for young people with intermediate levels of study. The

length of unemployment increases with age, but not with the level of educational attainment (Chilecalifica, 2005).

The economic activities in the region are concentrated in the services and manufacturing industries. Specifically, social and personal services account for 30.22 percent of the employment in the region followed by commerce with 18.13 percent and manufacturing with 14.8 percent (INE, 2007). The service sector also shows the highest employment growth in which more than fifty thousand jobs were created between 1993 and 2002. By contrast, agriculture lost around thirty thousands jobs. Employment growth in manufacturing remained equal.

The share of the employed workforce by sector in the region VIII between 1993 and 2002 shows a marked increase of the tertiary sector, raising seven and a half points in the regional employment (Chilecalifica, 2005). The rate of unemployment in the region in the Agriculture, Fishing and Hunting sector reached 3.3 percent.

Regardless of employment data, economic activity is led by manufacturing industry mainly through Forestry and Fishing activities. Some features of the main sectors in the regional economy are described in the annexe I.

To sum up, the region is highly industrialized and externally oriented. It has a significant impact on the Chilean economy mainly due to export in the manufacturing sector. The tertiary industry is also increasing exponentially through the development of trade, transport, storage and educational services. The most important pole of development is focused on the manufacturing sector. Forestry and fishing industries are consolidated however, they are experiencing continuous claims for efficiency, and the need for adding value to the products in more highly competitive international markets.

The region has some specific features such as the dominance of forestry and fishing sectors as main economic activities. It shows the bipolar condition of the whole country. Economic growth in some areas coexists with higher levels of

unemployment and lower growth index compared to national rates, mainly due to depression of specific areas in the primary sector, such as the crisis in the fishing industry and the closing down of the coal industry.

Overall Chile has a strong and stable economy, an educated labour force and experience using information and communication technology that helped in the entry stages of the transition into a knowledge-based economy. The challenge for the country is to sustain economic growth and social development and much will depend on the ability of the economy to diversify and reduce its dependence on low value-added exports; natural resources are unlikely to remain sources of growth in the future. The Chilean economy has already made some progress towards this goal, however its low skilled workforce is less likely to be able to adapt successfully to new work conditions and to cope with demands of knowledge-based economy.

These conditions imply a strong demand to maintain and develop an employable labour force. Government initiatives are oriented to more socially vulnerable groups and focus on improving educational levels; in contrast, more educated workers, with better jobs, rely on their personal abilities to cope with the changes. At the same time, future requirements are seen to transcend the need for qualifications and attitudes to work, reaching more internal matters. Mature workers might not be fully aware of the future's demands and their impact on employability.

1.4 Work roles, the case of middle-aged, middle managers

Employability has different connotations according to age, gender, occupation and the sector people work in. Even though the knowledge-based economy presents interesting opportunities for some people in terms of employability, it can also be translated into insecurity and exclusion for many others.

Employability has increasingly been considered as a critical issue, especially for those in a risk situation (ILO, 2002) and despite the improvements along the most significant dimensions of the labour market performance during the last decades,

there are still some issues that remain unresolved. According to the OECD, raising employment rates and improving career prospects for under-represented workers (such as older workers and women) are critical to maintaining sustainable development (OECD, 2006). Moreover, with the aging process of the working population scholars have focused their attention more on mature workers and their ability to cope with the complexities of the modern work environments. There is also an agreement that strategies should begin at earlier stages in careers (OECD, 2005).

This research is on the male population, since there is agreement that gender is an important variable in the way people experience work and develop their careers (Levinson, 1978; Gallos, 1989; Marshal, 1989). Arguably men have been socialized to achieve their identity primarily through work and professional accomplishments and in this sense they are heavily dependent on their work (Harris, 1995; Gallos, 1989). On the other hand, women basically go through different phases of adult development than men (Levinson et al., 1978; Cytrynbaum and Crites, 1989; Marshal, 1989) and the future developments of the labour market, such as the increase in services, part time and temporary work arrangement among others, tend to be more favourable for women than men. This is not to marginalise the situation of women who may become the focus of future research but rather, out of a need to focus this study in a way that almost necessitates concentration on men's experiences.

This section describes the situation of middle-aged middle managers in the labour market. Issues of age, stages in careers and managerial roles of this particular group are described and their effects on personal employability are explored.

Middle age is considered the range between 39 to 50 years old. However, it is important to point out the lack of clarity regarding classification of age groups. According the criterion for protection under the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (1967), older workers are those aged 40 or more. Other studies report the age of older workers to be between 45 and 70 years old (Patrickson and Ranzjin, 2003). Sterns and Miklos (1995) consider older workers those individuals of 55 years and

over. Despite the discrepancies, the range of 39 to 50 was considered the most appropriate for this study because it represents the period between the prime age - 25 to 39 years old the age range that concentrates the majority of jobs - and the age of 50, the most representative of the condition of older worker.

A number of studies have highlighted the difficulties faced by older workers and the need to tackle them at earlier stages. Results from the Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey (ALL) (OECD, 2005b) concluded that age is a barrier since both younger and older workers face difficulties in the labour market. Although unemployment rates tend to be higher among young labour force participants, younger adults are able to exit unemployment more quickly than older workers and the average duration of unemployment tends to be higher in this latter age group.

Regarding skills development, ALL (OECD, 2005b) indicates that the highest scoring working adults tend to be the most numerous in the group aged 25 to 45 and the lowest among older workers aged 46 to 65. More educated adults are in a better position since skills play a key role in workers' ability to remain in the labour market. Adults with higher levels of skills of the types measured in ALL display a lower likelihood of being unemployed and when they do experience unemployment they have a higher likelihood of re-entering employment sooner. Also, data from the OECD countries indicates that workers with higher skills find it easier to obtain employment and low skill adults are more likely than medium or high skills adults to experience unemployment in half of the OECD countries (OECD, 2005a). However, the OECD report (2006) also concludes that the incidence of training in all the reviewed countries decreases with age.

Throughout the life cycle people face different demands regarding their employability. Implicit in some definitions of employability is the ability to undertake changes, and mature workers may resist job changes (Hall, 1986). Life span development theories of career stress the notion of 'maintenance' at middle age; that is, workers tend to set into a stable phase and remain in the same work (Super, 1957; 1986; Hall, 1986).

There are some organisational factors that might reduce the opportunities of change for middle-aged workers. One cause suggested is the narrowing pyramidal structure of the organization and the stage of life of many contemporary organizations, a period of organisational maturity marked by slow growth, a steady state or decline. The organisational response to slower growth is often the elimination of jobs and layers of management, which further reduces the opportunities for established midcareer employees (Hall, 1986).

Midcareer is also generally a period in which workers are more likely to experience plateau or stagnation (Appelbaum and Santiago 1997). Plateau is defined as 'the point at which future career mobility, including both upward and lateral moves, is in reasonable doubt because the length of time in the present position has been unduly prolonged' (Veiga, 1981, cited in Veiga, 1981, p. 567). Veiga (1981) classified subjects as plateaued if tenure in their present position was equal to or greater than 7 years.

Other authors have highlighted the disadvantages of lack of mobility. Some authors suggest that a person that spends most of his/her career in a single industry, company or position, finds it harder to adapt to a new speciality or new functional area (Hall, 1986; 1991; Weick and Berlinger, 1989). Schabracq (1994) refers to the notion of 'concentration of experience'. Originally coined by Thijssen (1988 as cited in Schabracq, 1994) 'concentration of experience' depicts the process of specialization that takes place when knowledge and skills are developed within the limits of one specific job. Schabracq (1994) suggests that this process of over-specialization is reinforced with aging, 'as the younger are more focused on change, the elderly are on average more directed towards the maintenance of a stable present' (Schabracq, 1994, p. 237).

Van der Heijden (2003) in her research on career mobility and occupational expertise in three different age groups found that job changes are more important for middle-

aged workers compared to young and mature workers, and growth and flexibility are positively related to job change in the three age groups analysed.

In addition, scholars and international institutions have explored the relationship between tenure and productivity. A study from ILO (Auer, Berg and Coulibaky, 2004) using data for 13 European countries, the US and Japan, from the years 1992 to 2002 concluded that there was a positive and significant association between tenure and labour productivity, with a 1.0 percent increase in the average rate of tenure rinsing productivity by 0.16 per cent. However, a concern is whether greater segmentation in class of tenure affects productivity. Further analysis suggested that different groups of tenured workers behave differently in terms of productivity. The study distinguished amongst short tenure workers (workers with less than one year with the same employer), long-tenure workers (workers with more than 10 years of tenure) and very long tenure workers (workers with more than 20 years). The results show that for these all three groups the effect on productivity is negative and significant increasing, that is, the share of workers with short, long and very long tenure will have a negative effect on productivity. These results confirm findings in other studies in which short-term workers cause a fall in productivity. Auer et al. (2004) quote a study in the United States in which workers with 0-6 months of tenure in the durable goods industries were only 24 percent as productive as workers with over two years of tenure. These findings might suggest that there is an optimal tenure, however, they conclude that it is difficult to predict since it depends on occupation, sector or even country. A tentative conclusion is that in general short tenure (less than one year) and long tenure (more than ten years, but particularly above 15 and 20 years) can have negative effects on productivity (Auer et al., 2004).

Some authors speculate about the reasons of the lack of mobility in mature workers. Potential wage losses (OECD, 2005) have been cited as well as the tendency of middle-aged workers to adapt to the lack of advancement opportunities by lowering their expectations and developing non-work facets in their lives (London and Stumpf, 1986).

Bailey and Hansson (1995 cited in Hansson, Dekoekkoek, Neece and Paterson, 1997) investigated the psychological obstacles of adaptive career change among workers aged 45 years and older. They identified three general types of risks likely to inhibit career change: perceived age-inappropriateness for change (e.g. having to start one's career again at the bottom), concern about age discrimination in a new work setting and the likelihood of hastened occupational obsolescence, e.g. not being able to build on past experiences. Authors added that people who also held negative attitudes about their own aging perceived obstacles to be greater.

Previously, Hall (1986) explained that as the person becomes established in a career field he or she tends to develop a 'career routine'. Career routine seems to be functional in the sense that it enables the person to perform with less effort; however, it also impedes later innovation. As Hall has argued 'if the person's early career was spent in one specialized area or function, this would make it harder to adapt to a new speciality, a new function or a new technology'. He added, 'the larger and stronger the career routine becomes, the more difficult the adaptation is' (Hall, 1986, p.247).

Hansson et al. (1997) argue that low mobility in mature workers might be related to the fear of starting over again at the bottom of a new firm, especially if the market value of their previous experience and skills is low. In accord with these, Sullivan et al. (1998) suggest that it is the lack of developmental opportunities that reduces the chances of mature workers making the transitions in their careers. On average across the OECD countries, the hiring rate of workers aged 50 and over was less than half the rate for workers aged between 25 and 49 years (OECD, 2006).

In his research of development opportunities for employees over 40, Boerlijst (1994) found that this group was not well equipped for other functions outside their own field of work and the main cause for this was an age-related lack of training. Because of the lack of skills to perform effectively in another field and the investment required to reverse this situation, this group is considered less employable according to their supervisors' opinion.

Other challenges for mature workers derive from their distinctive characteristics and role in the workforce. Data in UK suggests that older workers are more likely to be self-employed than younger workers and they are also substantially more likely to be working part-time than those between 30 and 49 years old (Green, 2003). In addition, the Labour Force Survey in the UK shows that those aged between 50 years and retirement age are more concentrated in skilled trade occupations and in process, plant and machine operative occupations than prime age or younger workers (Green, 2003). These kinds of occupations have seen a decline in the number of employees and this trend is said to continue. It is possible that the workforce in middle age will have to move sectors or occupations in order to remain employable.

To maintain their employability middle-aged workers have to cope with demands that are new and challenging. It is expected that mature workers will need to remain longer in the labour force due to conditions such as higher life expectancies, changes to pension policies, late marriages and parenthood, amongst others. Also, changes in work conditions, continued upskilling and the emphasis on self-management of careers might be demanding for that age group. As Patrickson and Ranzijn argued, “taking charge of their lives, analysing their situation in a strategic way, initiating actions where the likelihood of a successful outcome was higher, creating demand for what they could offer were all strategies that led to employment...however, such behaviour may not be typical of this generation nor for this age group” (Patrickson and Ranzijn, 2003, p. 59).

The changes taking place in the structure of employment mean diversity of opportunities and multiple career patterns and experiences in which ‘career’ means a great number of transitions and, in this context, people may be not completely aware of how to achieve satisfactory careers. Moreover, the early career tends to be characterized by a serial and collective socialization process, however in later years advancement is determined more by an individual’s potential and performance rather than by organisational processes (Hall, 1986). These trends reinforce the current notion of self-management of one’s career that might result in great challenges for those with a traditional employment relationship and beliefs of lifetime job security.

The second focal point in this research is the middle managerial position. Middle managers are a crucial group because they are widely regarded as among those more affected by recent changes in work organisation. For example, middle management is the group with the major likelihood to experience lay offs when organizations are cutting positions to be more cost effective (Nicholson and West, 1989) and they are being replaced by technology in their role as ‘processors and interpreters’ of information (London and Stumpf, 1986). Data from the American Management Association, point out that the average percentage of managerial and supervisory positions lost between 1998 and 2000 in USA was 35.6 percent and the number of positions created was only 17.7 percent (American Management Association 2000 quoted in Power and Rothausen, 2003).

The context of the knowledge-based economy and the radical transformations of the labour market was presented in this section. Issues regarding the structural changes in employment as well as changing work conditions and the requirements of new skills place great challenges for some groups in the workforce. Middle-aged workers are a strategic population to which attention should be directed. Due to the aging phenomenon in the workforce, efforts need to be addressed not only to older workers but also at earlier stages, this group in no more than ten years time will reach the category of older workers and need to be prepared to maintain their employability.

Economies are relying more and more on the quality of their human resources but mature workers are not receiving the same support as younger workers (OECD, 2006). The requirement of continued upskilling and learning throughout life implies demands for government and educational institutions but mainly it places greater pressure on the individual. Despite Chilean efforts, focused mainly on the unskilled, issues of employability remain a personal matter. Consequently, mature workers need to learn how to deal with a new work environment, without lifetime job security and self-managing their careers, which might require a different set of skills and most importantly new attitudes towards work.

It is expected that mobility throughout the career will become common in Chilean workers in the near future. In order to remain in the labour market, workers will need to transit from the primary and secondary industries towards the tertiary sector where the majority of new jobs will be concentrated and this could mean new statuses that challenge workers' current identities especially in a culture that values stability and where mobility is closely tied to instability and vulnerability. In addition, people in midcareer and middle managerial roles have to face fewer options of mobility within the company as they are more exposed to redundancy, so they are more threatened than workers in other stages of career and in other organisational positions.

The conditions mentioned will impact the entire work life cycle, including more internal and personal aspects such as individuals' meaning of work and career identity, and a close analysis of these matters is expected to provide a richer understanding of personal employability.

1. 5 Aims of the study and the overall approach

In the context of a highly competitive labour market, the demise of lifelong job security and the emergence of new patterns of careers, this research aims to explore the relationship between the self and personal employability.

Identity issues are implicit in life transitions, so this study sets out to explore the concept of career identity and its relationship with employability. Career identity is conceptualized here as an aggregate of self-representations that answer the question of who someone is in the work domain. Career identity has a longitudinal perspective and people construct their identities along the variety of experiences that form a career. As will be explained later, the construction of identity in the career field takes the forms of narratives.

Since much of the theoretical and empirical research conducted to date has addressed the influence of job and career transitions on someone's identity, this research aims

to explore how identity issues in the career context operates with respect to the process of making transitions and maintaining employability.

The purposes of the study are therefore:

1. To contribute to knowledge about employability and in particular to generate insight into the relationship between employability and career identity.
2. To understand how middle-aged middle-managers' employability interacts with the process of constructing meaning of one's career experiences and the sense of identity in the career domain.
3. To contribute to career counselling and training and development practice by identifying ways to assist mature workers in maintaining their employability.

A mixed methods approach was used which combined a quantitative inquiry with a qualitative approach, focused on individual interviews.

The initial quantitative method involved a questionnaire survey, by which biographical data, work history as well as measures of personal employability and social identification were collected from a sample of middle managers. This information allowed initial mapping of the experiences of this population and exploration of the extent to which these match or contrast with previous information on key characteristics.

Thereafter, in-depth interviews with a purposive sample of the respondents to the questionnaire study took place using a narrative approach to career wherein stories and meanings of career experiences were collected. Studying and interpreting self-generated narratives allowed searching for deeper understanding of the participants' lives experiences of the career. This approach also accommodates treatment of the teller's culture and social world (Gergen and Gergen, 1998).

II

Employability

2.1 Concept and models

This section explores the concept of employability, the main models described in the literature and some empirical evidence on the topic.

Despite the extended use of the concept, employability is a complex construct with no agreement regarding its predictor variables, dimensions and measurement. What definitions have in common is that employability is seen as being about work and the relationship between workers and the labour market (Hillage and Pollard, 1998; Brown, Hesketh and Williams, 2003; Sanders and De Grip, 2004; Kluytmans and Ott, 1999; Fugate, Kinicki and Ashforth, 2004).

There is a variety of models and definitions stressing either individual or external factors as determinants of employability. Some of them refer to a narrow set of personal characteristics and others to a complex collection of personal and social factors. However, there is no consensus on what makes a person employable.

Among the wide range of personal characteristics included in employability the majority refers to age, gender, qualifications, training and flexibility in terms of location, functions or general activities. Constructs of social capital and self-management abilities are also mentioned. Among social and economic factors, authors place importance on the demand side of the labour market and employment indicators (Brown, Hesketh and Williams, 2003). Some conceptualizations emphasize the responsibility of employability on the individuals themselves, others have a more interactive perspective that includes governments, education systems and other social partners.

Gazier (2001) described how the concept has evolved since it first appeared. The first notion of employability dates back to the 1900 and presented employability as a

simple dichotomy, individuals were employable or not, based on factors such as age and physical adequacy.

In the second wave of the concept, a quantitative view of employability was introduced, suggesting that individuals could be more or less employable. Characteristics were initially focused on physical and mental abilities in handicapped people, and then the attention moved to unemployed people that had difficulties getting new jobs. There were a range of factors involved including severe deficiencies and different social aspects. This wider approach allowed more accurate initiatives to improve employability.

During the 1980's and 1990's a new proposal of the employability concept emerged which included a statistical indicator of employability based on the probability of obtaining a job, its probable duration and salary. By these three probabilities, a synthetic indicator was obtained for the aptitude of being gainfully employed on the labour market. As Gazier (2001) pointed out, this version introduced some indicators of the quality of a job such as duration and salary.

A new adaptation in the same wave emphasised individual responsibility and the person's capacity to generate human and social capital. Gazier stated that this is an individualistic however more dynamic version (Gazier, 2001). The conceptualization of employability as an aggregate of personal variables that influence someone's capacity to integrate into the labour market has been the dominant focus in the literature of employability derived from psychology oriented studies.

By 1994, based on a Canadian definition a new version of the concept was proposed. Employability was seen as "the relative capacity of an individual to achieve meaningful employment given the interaction between personal characteristics and the labour market" (Gazier, 2001, p. 9). This is a more multidimensional version that connects personal characteristics with conditions of the labour market.

After the proposal of Canada, Hillage and Pollard (1998) developed one of the most well known works on employability. In 1998 these authors were commissioned by the UK's Department for Education and Employment to review relevant literature on employability to come up with a definition and framework of the concept for policy developments.

The report concluded that employability is about having the capability to gain initial employment, maintain employment and obtain new employment if required (Hillage and Pollard, 1998). In their proposal employability is composed of four elements: Assets, Deployment, Presentation and Context. Assets include knowledge, skills and attitudes in three different levels of complexity. Deployment refers to a set of skills grouped in three factors: career management skills, job search skills and adaptability. With respect to Presentation, the authors highlighted the importance of 'marketability' and the ability of individuals to present themselves in the labour market. The Context refers the need of understanding the personal and external circumstances that affect individual employability.

Later on, Fugate, Kinicki and Ashforth, (2004) present employability as a form of work-specific adaptability that plays an important role in how people cope with organisational change and manage their career development. They defined employability as 'one's ability to identify and realize occupational opportunities within and between organizations over the course of a career... and the process of enabling employees to optimise career opportunities and to manage their own careers' (Fugate et al. 2004, p.15). This model considers employability as an aggregate multidimensional construct, comprised of three, latent, person-centred dimensions: Career Identity, Personal Adaptability and Human and Social Capital that create or cause one's employability (Fugate et al, 2004). In their view, career identity represents a coherent representation of career experiences and aspirations that may enhance personal ability to identify and realize career opportunities. Personal adaptability refers to the ability to change personal factors to meet the demands of the situation, it includes characteristics such as optimism, propensity to learn, openness, internal locus control and generalized self-efficacy. Human capital

variable includes educational level, experience and training. Social capital refers to the size and quality of personal networks. The authors proposed that all these factors influence people's career development and personal employability. Recently this model has been tested providing empirical support (McArdle, 2007).

A further development is the one proposed by Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2006) who define and operationalize the concept of employability and then develop an instrument for measuring it. Using a competence-based approach, the authors define employability as 'the continuously fulfilling, acquiring and creating work through the optimal use of competences' (Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden, as cited in Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden, 2006). Employability is comprised by five dimensions that serve as a basis of its operationalization and measurement: occupational expertise, anticipation and optimization, personal flexibility, corporate sense and balance. Occupational *expertise* is considered a core factor of employability that enables people to find and maintain a job and also to support career development. *Anticipation and optimization* together with personal flexibility are adaptation competences extensively described in the literature on the topic and which also support career development. *Corporate sense* refers to the ability to perform in diverse contexts and work groups. Finally, *balance* refers to the management of the competing demands from the organizations or the individuals themselves from which the individuals have to cope with. Based on these five dimensions the authors developed an instrument for measuring employability, applicable to individuals from diverse areas of expertise.

Van Dam (2004) proposes the concept of employability orientation as an antecedent of the behavioural aspects of employability. Employability orientation refers "to the attitudes of employees toward interventions aimed at increasing the organization's flexibility through developing and maintaining worker's employability for the organization" (Van Dam, 2004, p.30). In her model she suggests that employability activities are a function of the employability orientation and this latter concept is dependent on openness, initiative, tenure and career development support. Empirical research supported the conceptual model and employability orientation was

predictive of employability activities. Her findings also pointed out a positive relationship between openness, initiative and employability orientation and a negative relationship between organizational tenure and employability orientation. Different variables were identified as mediators of these relationships.

The distinction between types of employability was introduced by Sanders and De Grip (2004). The authors distinguish between three forms of employability, job match employability that refers to workers' chance to remain employed in their current job within the current firm, *internal employability* or the chance to switch to another job within the current firm, and *external employability* that refers to workers' chances to access to another job in another firm.

Other proposals transcend the individual level and combined individual factors with characteristics of the labour market as the case of the model developed by De Grip, van Loo and Sanders (1999). They argue that being employable 'involves both the capacity and the willingness to be and to remain attractive for the labour market, by anticipating changes in tasks and work environment and reacting on them' (De Grip et al. 1999, p. 3).

The authors recognized a need to analyse employability according to segments in the labour market, mainly because occupations and sectors of industry are not confronted with developments to the same extent and the need for employability differs among them. They create an Industry Employability Index (IEI) that is an integration of three different measures, the first one is an indicator of current personal employability that combines three measures based on the individuals' willingness and capacity to be mobile, to participate in training and to be functionally flexible. The second measure refers to the need of employability or to the extent to which current developments in society (technological, organisational, economic and demographic) impact sectors and are translated into need of employability. The third measure addresses the possibilities within the sector to expand someone's employability, such as training provision.

When a sector of industry has a population with high or moderate indicator of personal employability, moderate needs of employability and favourable conditions to expand someone's employability the IEI will be relatively high. The results indicated that financial services have the best score on the IEI and agriculture and fisheries sector has the lowest. When analysing the results according age groups, the situation for older workers is worse than it is for the younger and low educated workers face worse prospects in terms of employability than intermediate or higher-educated workers. According to sectors, agriculture and fisheries are the least involved in training compared to the other sectors analysed and this contribute to the low IEI (De Grip et al., 1999).

Different approaches to the concept stress the role of flexibility and mobility in personal employability (De Grip et al., 1999; Sanders and de Grip, 2004; Van der Heijden, 2002). Groot and Maasen Van den Brink (2000) operationalized employability in terms of the extent to which the worker can be assigned to other jobs or departments within the firm and by the way small problems at work are solved or how well a task the worker is assigned to can be handled by the worker on his/her own. In addition, Van der Heijden (2002; 2003) related and tested the concept of employability in relationship to professional expertise. As a dependent variable employability was defined as "the time an employee has already spent in his or her present function as well as the likelihood, according to his or her supervisor, that the employee will be given a different function in the near future" (Van der Heijden, 2002, p. 47). A high degree of employability means that in the following five years, there is a good likelihood of moving to another upward or equivalent function in the same or different domains as the present job.

Van der Heijden (2002; 2003) and Van Dam (2004) emphasize the relationship between employability and age and tenure. Employability decreases with age and high tenure reduces the chances of mobility and thus can impact negatively in personal employability.

Predictors of employability cited in the literature comprised a wide range of personal characteristics that includes demographic variables, such as gender and age (Van der Heijden, 2002); individual variables such as openness (Fugate, 2004; Van Dam, 2004), locus of control (Fugate et al., 2004), career identity (Fugate et al., 2004) and personal adaptability among others, and some work-related variables, such as tenure (Van Dam, 2004; Fugate et al., 2004, Sanders and De Grip, 2003), perceived organizational support (Van Dam, 2004), willingness and capacity to be mobile and to participate in training; flexibility in terms of location and work activities (De Grip et al., 1999; Sanders and De Grip, 2004) and employability orientation (Van Dam, 2004) to name a few.

A comprehensive understanding of employability demands consideration of a diversity of disciplines. However, due to the nature of this study, individuals' factors are stressed and the current analysis is based mainly on literature drawn from psychology and social psychology. Sociological oriented proposals address employability in terms of the structural characteristics of the labour market (Brown et al., 2003) and economic models insist also in the dynamic of the labour market. This research ascribes to the notion of employability as a person-centred construct; however, it also takes into account the general context in which individuals work. Sectors of the industry, characterisation of the firms and the social construction of careers are among the contextual factors that are considered.

2.2 Overview

Employability is understood here as the general ability to remain attractive in the labour market. The literature reviewed agrees that the capacity to undertake changes is a key component in personal employability. Variables such as flexibility and variety are considered as influential in the attractiveness of someone in the labour market and most of the current definitions stressed change in the employee work situation (De Grip et al., 1999; Van der Heijden, 2002; Sanders and De Grip, 2004, Van Dam, 2004). In order to be or become employable, an employee may have to change work content, jobs or departments which has been the main component of what is named the 'new career' (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996). In accordance,

measures of employability have been operationalized as worker's probable changes in the labour market, such as their labour market be it real or expected; the extent to which the worker can be assigned to other jobs or departments within the firm by survey questions; the time an employee has already spent in his or her present function; the likelihood that the employee will be given a different function in the near future, amongst others.

After analysing the diverse conceptualization of employability and having been suggested of the role of some personal variables in remaining attractive in the internal and external labour markets, the first part of this research attempts to explore these issues. The concept of career, mobility and career patterns are developed in the next chapter.

III

Employment relationship and career

This section presents the evolution in the notion of career and the emergent topics in the field. Based on literature from organisational psychology, the traditional and the new career are described together with the conditions that have given place to the reconsideration of careers, such as transformations in the psychological contract and the employment relationship. Objective and subjective aspects of career are developed. The former includes descriptions of career transitions, job mobility and the reasons for job change. In the analysis of the subjective aspects of career, identity issues are described and the concept of career identity is introduced.

3.1 The employment relationship and the new psychological contract in organisational contexts

When reflecting on the development in the notion of career, matters concerning the nature of the employment relationship need attention. The current business environment and the transformations of social aspects of work impact the kind of attachment workers have to their firms. Structural changes in organisations such as downsizing, delayering and merger; decreases in the average life of companies and transformations in the structure of employment are among the factors that have influenced that the traditional employment relationship and its values of loyalty and job security have begun to disappear, giving place to a new work contract (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996).

The term psychological contract (PC) is assumed to have a key role in understanding organisational behaviour. Psychological contracts represent the 'individual's beliefs in reciprocal obligations between employees and employers' (Rousseau, 1990, p.389). Either oral or written, a particular psychological contract involves promises made in exchange for some return for both, employers and employees.

There has been wide interest in the ways that the traditional psychological contract is changing. Mac Neill (cited in Rousseau, 1990) identified two forms of the contract: the relational contract, based on a long-term mutual commitment to the relationship and the transactional contract based on a shorter-term exchange of benefits and services. Relational contracts consider open-ended agreements to maintain the relationship involving either tangible or non-tangible exchanges (such as money or loyalty). In contrast, transactional contracts involve specific monetary exchanges between parties over a specific period of time. They usually take the form of temporary contracts or hiring specific skills to supply specific needs, so they are short term and performance-based (Rousseau, 1990; Roehling, 1997). The transactional contract emerges as a new form of relationship between employer and employee leaving behind the former mutual long life commitment.

In their assessment of the current thinking of the nature of the employment relationship based on content analysis of relevant literature, Roehling et al. (2000) agreed that the new relationship is characterized by the employer providing employees training, education and skill development opportunities and the employees assuming the responsibility for developing and maintaining their work-related skills. In contrast, scant literature describes the employment relationship as involving traditional loyalty, and many of them explicitly mention that loyalty is not part of the current work relationship.

The new psychological contract is closely related to the nature of career as suggested by empirical evidence. Rousseau (1990) found that perceptions of employee's obligations for loyalty and the minimum length of employment they were supposed to have were related to the perception of employer's obligations to provide job security. In addition, the way people manage their careers is related to the psychological contract they set. Workers who approach their careers in opportunistic fashion, that is those who expect to change employers many times in their careers, are more likely to develop transactional relationships with their employers (Rousseau, 1990).

Changes in the employment relationship contribute to the renovate emphasis on employability. Workers with no expectations of lifelong security are progressively becoming more responsible for their own career development and consequent employability, especially those who traditionally have been considered privileged and who have not been targeted in the employability agenda.

Despite the interest in the topic, many issues remain untreated. For example, the cultural influence on the employment relationship has not been extensively addressed and most of the research is focused on Western, developed countries (Roehling et al. 2000). It could be expected that Chilean culture has some special features that are worth to take into account when studying the employment relationship and their influence in the way careers are forged. Also, issues of gender, age and stage of career might have implications on the type of relationship individuals develop with their organisations and consequently impact mobility, career development and employability.

3.2 A new conceptualization of career

Careers have been widely studied, many definitions have been proposed and different emphasis has been given to the concept that has changed strongly over the last decades.

Even though the conceptualization of career has evolved, there is consensus that some themes remain essential. The notion of time is inherent to the definition of career. Careers have a longitudinal perspective and an evolving nature through time which needs to be considered in order to develop a comprehensive understanding. Also, there is agreement that the study of careers transcends the scope of a single theory or field and its knowledge is shared among a range of disciplines (Arthur, Hall and Lawrence, 1989).

Early conceptualizations of career highlighted the notion of verticality and its use was restricted to occupations with formal hierarchical progression, such as managers

and professionals (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996). From that tradition, among the most quoted definitions of career was the one formulated by Wilensky who described a career as a 'succession of related jobs, arranged in a hierarchy of prestige, through which persons move in an ordered, more or less predictable sequence' (Wilensky, as cited in Barley, 1989, p.47). Jobs that did not lead to advancement were not considered as constituting a career.

Current conceptualizations make explicit statements against views of career exclusively as advancement or as professional development (Arthur et al. 1989). Sequences of jobs that do not follow a clear pattern of systematic advancement are also considered a career. In addition, the career is seen as more inclusive since it encompasses any kind of profession and occupation and it is not privative of any professional group. According to Arthur et al. 'everybody who works has a career' (Arthur et al.1989, p.9.)

The considerations described before lead to new definitions of career. The Handbook of Career Theory defined it as 'the unfolding sequence of a person's work experiences over time' (Arthur et al. 1989 p. 8) and this definition pervades recent literature in the area.

Recently the conceptualization of career has moved even further. The new career is defined in opposition to the traditional career also named 'organisational career' (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996, p. 5). Organisational career refers to those careers conceived to unfold in a single employment setting; in contrast, new conceptualizations suggest that career path is not progressive nor linear and it can be developed in different organisations (Arthur, 1994). Hall and Mirvis (1996) pointed out that this form of career is more flexible than the traditional concepts of career since it embraces any kind of flexible, idiosyncratic career course, unique for each person.

In addition, the contemporary career detaches status and hierarchy from career success and the assessment of career success rests primarily on the person having a career instead of third parties (Hall, 2002; Arthur and Rousseau, 1996).

Since the traditional concept of careers was focused on the succession of jobs, usually upward movements in the organisational ladder, career literature tended to concentrate on the objective aspects of careers. Objective careers refer to the externally defined reality of them, the visible, observable activities, behaviours or events that comprise a person's work history (Barley, 1989; Stephens, 1994). Recently, the emphasis has moved towards the notion of subjective careers that are focused on the meaning individuals attach to the unfolding events of their careers. The subjective career comprises the attitudes, orientations and perceptions about careers that are held by an individual. It complements the objective one and adds new criteria of success such as learning, psychological success and expansion of the identity (Hall and Mirvis, 1996). In this kind of career, the person is the central figure and the organisation provides the context in which individuals seek their personal aspirations.

The emphasis on the subjective career is highlighted in the recent discourse of protean careers (Hall, 1976 as cited in Hall, 1986) and boundaryless careers (Arthur, 1994).

The 'protean career' introduced by Hall in 1976 suggests that careers can take many forms and career meanings come from the individual's point of view (Hall, 1986). Protean careers are led by the individuals as opposed to careers developed by the organisation and are considered as a process of continued learning and self-direction, not necessarily one of formal training, retraining or upward mobility. In this context the role of the organisation is to provide challenges, information and other developmental resources. Most importantly, the centre of career turns to the individual and thus psychological success replaces objective success, and the focus on job security is transferred on employability (Hall and Mirvis, 1996). Briscoe and Hall (as cited in Briscoe et al. 2006) stress that protean careers involve values driven

and self-directed attitudes towards career management. That is, individuals with protean career attitudes guide their career based on their own values as opposed to organisation values and they are more independent in the labour market.

Boundaryless career was defined as a sequence of job opportunities that goes beyond the boundaries of a single employment setting (Arthur, 1994). Boundaryless careers can take many forms (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996) for example they comprise careers that develop across different employers or those that derive their marketability from outside the current employer like the case of an academic. Another type of boundaryless career is one that is sustained by external networks or information. Also, it is implicit in the career in which workers reject working opportunities due to personal or family reasons or when someone perceived a career freedom despite real constraints. As Arthur (1994) stated the boundaryless career stresses the independence of the individual from the traditional career principles.

Boundaryless attitudes are confirmed in findings from Storh, Brett and Reilly (1994). These authors compared two cohorts of managers (1978 and 1989) regarding career patterns and attachment to their organisation and the job. The managers in 1989 were changing jobs and relocating more frequently than were the 1978 managers. The 1989 managers had worked for 2.42 companies and the 1978 managers for 1.75 companies. They speculate that the increased career mobility of the 1989 cohort can be attributed not only to the turbulence of the period, but also to the fact that people jump from one job to another looking for opportunities of development. Finally they suggest that the current psychological contract between employers and employees is based on the intrinsic nature of the job, rather than on the extrinsic factors such as job security, 'it appears that the challenging, autonomous nature of managerial jobs may have replaced the corporations' former commitment to lifetime employment (Storh et al.1994, p. 546).

These findings are in accordance with protean careers that decouple the concept of career from any organisation. If the old contract was with the organisation, in the protean career the contract is with the self and one's work (Mirvis and Hall, 1994), or

as Storh et al. (1994) stated, managers are becoming more loyal to their professions rather than to their work place. A similar notion is stressed in knowledge workers who, according to Stewart (1999), have more freedom to move. In his view careers are made in markets and not in hierarchies and the main choices for the employers are between aspects such as specializing and generalizing instead of choosing from one organisation or another (Stewart, 1999).

Empirical research regarding the relationship between boundaryless career and protean careers conclude that both are related but independent constructs. Proactive workers with a protean attitude to their career are not necessarily active in terms of mobility (Briscoe et al. 2006).

There are several factors that have influenced the current nature of careers. They come from macro social, economical and organisational changes to transformations in the work experience at the individual level. Some authors have emphasized the relationship between careers and organisational change. Miles and Snow (1996) postulated the simultaneous evolution of career and organisational forms using the notion of periods or 'waves' borrowed from Toffler (as cited in Miles and Snow, 1996). The authors stated that in prior times careers were defined in company-specific terms and involve lifetime movements up the organisational ladder usually within the same company or in a few companies. It was the employer who defined career progress and workers tended to develop specific technical competences. Later on, in the so called 'third wave' or network, the hierarchies were flattened and disaggregated, the permanent workforce was small, with highly visible but limited set of internal career opportunities so they moved across projects to obtain experience and both the person and employer are involved in the individuals' career progress. In the 'fourth wave' in which firms seek to eliminate hierarchies to become a 'cell', careers are characterized for people working as self-employed professionals who look for expanding professional expertise and who define his or her own career progresses.

Despite the diversity of antecedents for the emergent career, current development on the topic agrees that the new career seems to end up in higher freedom and personal independence in the labour market. As Weick (1996) pointed out ‘work experience is more decoupled from specific organisations, more proactive and enactive, more indistinguishable from organising, more portable, more discontinuous, less predictable, and more reliant on improvisation” (Weick, 1996, p.41).

This career opens a series of opportunities but also can have a down side and different implications for different types of workers. Issues of gender, age, career stage, occupation and types of organisation, to name just a few factors influence differently the individual experiences of the new career.

Identity becomes particularly relevant to this matter especially for those whose personal identities and social identities are closely tied to work roles and a stable career is a prominent source of self-identity. There is much literature about the difficulties of constructing sustainable identities in the new workplace with the consequent impacts at individual and organisational levels (Sennet, 1998; Giddens, 1991). This aspect will be further explained later.

3.3 Career development, theoretical formulations and some empirical evidence

Different theories have been formulated to explain career and its course. These formulations have gone through different phases, each one highlighting specific aspects of the career and formulating a variety of relationships among them.

The most well known theories are those that conceptualize career from the developmental point of view. They stress that the individual’s experiences in work related situations evolve along some predefined course. Amongst the developmental views of career there are models that postulate stages or periods, such as Super’s model (1957). He pictured career development as following five life stages characterized as a sequence of Growth, Exploration, Establishment, Maintenance, and Disengagement phases. Each stage is characterized by developmental tasks and

the development through them can be guided partly by facilitating the maturing of abilities, interests, coping resources and partly by aiding in the development of self-concepts (Super, 1957).

The model of career adjustment of Crites (as cited in Cytrynbaum and Crites, 1989) and Dalton and Thompson's model of the stages of careers (as cited in Dalton, 1989) are also based on developmental approaches to career. Life-span developmental theories, however, have been criticised for the lack of consideration of contextual factors in the analysis. They suggested that people go through predicted stages without considering individual differences or broader aspects of the environment. Recent conceptualisations of career tend not to assume universal, objectively identifiable nor normative stages of development but rather individual directions of change or development. As an example, initially Hall and Nougaim (as cited in Hall, 2002) from their study of young AT&T managers suggested a three-stage model of career development comprised by establishment, advancement and maintenance. Along these three stages individuals go from needs of security and the search for integration into the organisational system to concern of promotion and achievement to finally reach a level in which the opportunities of development are reduced. In a later proposition, Hall moved from this linear view of career to a new model based on a succession of short-cycle learning stages (Hall, 1986). He proposed that instead of one long cycle containing stages of exploration, trial and establishment, careers today are composed by many short and continuous cycles lasting around two to four years which contain exploratory, trial, establishment and mastery phases.

Another group of theories are those from the trait-factors tradition, which focus on the individual differences and the role they play in the development of careers (Betz, Fitzgerald and Hill, 1989). Essentially, what these theories suggest are that optimal career outcomes derive from the match between personal characteristics (such as abilities, interests, needs and values) and those from the organisation. Theory of work adjustment from Dawis et al., Holland's theory and Roe's formulations (as

cited in Betz, Fitzgerald and Hill, 1989) are amongst the most cited trait-factor theories.

Other formulations of career development suggest that organisational factors drive individual career transitions and the logic behind this is organisational and employees learning. Robinson and Miner (1996) proposed that job transitions arise from organisations' needs of variation on the current practices, selection of the new routines and retention of them. These learning phases can result in new positions, promotions or new opportunities for development not only generating intraorganisational career transitions but also in interorganisational contexts. The current organisational environment leads to organisational and individual learning processes that act as catalysts of and moderators to career transitions (Robison and Miner, 1996).

What has been a focus of long debate is the relative influence of internal or external factors (personal conditions such as traits and attitudes in opposition to organisational characteristics) in shaping careers (Bell and Staw, 1989). The emphasis on situational variables is stressed in the socialization view of careers in which the organisation is the dominant entity and the individuals are seen as reacting to organisational contingencies and being shaped by their companies. On the other hand, there are authors that argue for a more personally oriented approach in which individuals have more control over their careers as in the case of protean career proposed by Hall (1986).

Recent views of careers emphasise their self-directed character in which it is the individual, in opposition to the organisation, who assumes a predominant role in managing his or her career course. However, it is not possible to avoid the fact that there are many intervening factors that can shape a career regardless personal influence.

External factors can include macro conditions such as characteristics of the labour market and the working culture of the work force. For example, there are significant

differences in patterns of mobility in careers across countries, the average age of the workforce and cultural values to name just a few (Auer et al., 2004). In addition, career patterns vary highly between primary or secondary labour markets. Mobility rates in the secondary labour market are associated with vulnerability in the employment and careers seem to be as being shaped rather than shaped by the individual (Henríquez and Uribe-Echavarría, 2004).

Despite these previous considerations, the literature reviewed here, mainly from the psychology field, emphasise the personal role in career management. What follows is a closer analysis of issues of agency in career development.

3.4 Agency in the career domain

As it was stated before, there is a long debate regarding the personal influence people have in shaping their careers. Life-span career theories such as Super's and Miller and Form's (as cited in Dalton, 1989) stressed the concept of career as a progression along some course. However, these theories seem to be insufficient to explain the variety of trajectories that a career can follow.

One area of concern in this research is to understand to what extent careers are individually shaped. What follows is an attempt to comprehend the construct of agency and its applications in employment and career.

The concept of agency, based on the work of Bakan (as cited in Mc Adams, 1993; Marshal, 1989) has been extensively used. Bakan distinguishes between two modes of human functioning: agency and communion. Both are seen as basic coping strategies to dealing with the uncertainties and anxieties of life (McAdams, 1993). Agency refers to doing, self assertion, controlling the environment and searching for change. On the other hand, communion refers to involving oneself in accepting the environment. Agency is an expression of independence that rejects uncertainty and seeks for control, in contrast communion deals with the world through acceptance of change and personal adjustment, cooperation and understanding (Marshal, 1989).

Agency is in close relationship with the notion of the self as a reflexive project proposed by Giddens (1991) and the reasoning of Gergen (1991) of that indeterminacy is the pre-eminent principle of the life course and that individuals are agents of their own development.

At the social level and based on the work of Giddens and his structuration theory, Barley (1989) created a model that attempts to capture the relationship between individuals, organisations and society. He equated the notion of structure in Giddens terms as 'a set of scripts that encode contextually appropriate behaviour and perceptions' (Barley, 1989, p.53). These scripts are socially provided and in the case of career scripts, they come from employing companies, professional communities or other social contexts. Most importantly, career scripts provide people with a scheme from which they fashion and interpret their careers. Career scripts shape individuals' lives but on the other hand, individuals' actions ensure their existence, so enacting a particular career script people reproduce the institutions that they represent. In this dynamic, institutions (or career scripts) and individual action can be seen as a duality each influencing the other. In the analysis of the process of sensemaking of career, is it possible to access the socially shared career scripts and their role in shaping individuals' careers.

At the individual level, McAdams (1996) has extensively worked with the notion of agency and he has operationalized it in terms of four different notions that transcend the typical agentic rhetoric: self-mastery, status/victory, achievement/responsibility and empowerment.

Agency has been described in opposition to both communion (Marshall, 1989) and serendipity (Plunkett, 2001). As it was mentioned, communion is understood as acceptance and adjustment to the environment, described as 'being'. In contrast, agency is better represented by 'doing' in order to control and stabilize the environment. Serendipity in careers (Plunkett, 2001) emphasizes unplanned aspects of experience and it can be characterized by the absence of a preconceived intent,

goal or strategy to achieve a determined result and the preeminence of external factors such as chance, accident or circumstances (Plunkett, 2001).

There is a clear association between the concepts of agency, communion and serendipity as defined before with employment and concepts of career. In the current research these themes are reviewed and their relationships with other variables of interest such as mobility and meanings of career are explored.

Bell and Staw (1989) suggest that people may shape their environments much more than their environment shapes them and they proposed a model of personal control in organisations. The authors postulate that there are some personal characteristics related to the person acting as an agent (such as self-monitoring, risk seeking, and dominance, among others) which influence personal attempts of control over the organisation leading to perception of self-efficacy, satisfaction with the career or withdrawal from the organisation or from the career.

In contrast, in their longitudinal study of managerial careers, Nicholson and West (1988) addressed the issue of choice in career development as opposed to career being externally determined. Their findings suggested that managers were very poor at predicting their own job changes and only managers in very stable environments had an accurate view of their futures. Moreover, the authors reported managers' description of work experience as 'planless'. These findings suggest an opposite view of career as being volatile and unpredictable, with workers reacting to external circumstances instead of leading their own development. The authors stated that 'people are pulled by opportunities and images of the future; pushed by reactions to the past and the demands of the present; and all the time buffeted by the uncertainty surrounding these changes and forces' (Nicholson and West, 1988, p.93).

In her study of early career development in young women, Plunkett (2001) found that agency appeared in the form of continuity in individuals' career goals. However, contents of serendipity were highly frequent. Plunkett suggests that in a context of expectation and opportunity, career is a creative process that requires the

combination of 'planfulness and exploration and to tolerate the state of suspense of not knowing the final outcome' (Plunkett, 2001).

The sense of agency does not finish in the sense of choice and personal direction over the career. Agency can also be considered in the way people interpret and make meaning of their jobs. According to this extended view of agency, Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) propose the notion of employees as active crafters of their jobs. Basically they suggest that employees play an active role in shaping both the tasks and social relationships that compose a job in what they called job crafting or 'the physical and cognitive changes individuals make in the task or relational boundaries of their work' (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001, p.179). Job crafting can take different forms, for example changes in the job's task boundaries, that is altering the number, scope or type of jobs tasks; also, altering the relational boundaries of the job, for example when people change the quality or amount of the social interaction at work. Another way of job crafting exists when employees change the cognitive task boundaries of their jobs, for example in the perception of job as a set of discrete parts or an integrated whole.

As a result of the job crafting the meaning of work is affected so people alter the understanding of the purpose of their jobs and also change their work identity and their personal roles at work. The authors provided examples in which the process of crafting takes place and the meanings of job and the identity derived from the work differ radically among workers in the same position.

Notions underlying concepts of agency and job crafting enhance the view of employees as proactive and creative who develop personal meanings of their jobs and construct their own identities. At the same time, empirical evidence suggests that there are a variety of serendipitous elements in objective terms and even more in the subjective realm, that add unpredictability and complexity to the understanding of the career experience.

3.5 Career mobility, reasons for career change and career patterns

In the last decades literature on careers US based, have stressed employment flexibility and the decrease of jobs offering long-term employment (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996). This means there are a growing number of people undertaking career transitions and a rising tendency on mobility trends. Data of tenure indicates that the average of organisational tenure for 14 EU countries was 10.6 (Auer and Cazes, 2003; Auer et al. 2004). The shortest tenure (8.2 years on average) was found in United Kingdom. In general, European and Japanese workers have longer tenure than those in the United States that report an average of 6.6 years of tenure (Auer et al., 2004).

The proportion of workers with tenures under one year is particularly high (over 20 percent) in Denmark, Finland and Ireland and it is particularly low, less than 12 per cent, in Greece and Italy. The US labour market shows a higher percentage of short-tenure jobs and a much smaller proportion of long-tenure jobs. In the same research, Chile showed a mean of 5.5 years of tenure in the whole working population.

Authors conclude that even though mobility rates have been increasing, the notion of the end of stable jobs has been overstated (Jacoby, 1999; Auer and Cazes, 2003; Webb, 2004). In her analysis of trends from the UK Labour Force Survey, Webb (2004) conclude that between 1986 and 2000 there was no decline in the percentage of employees with ten or more years of employment and no high increase in those with less than one year in the same company. The sharp decrease in the average year of tenure seems to be particularly characteristic of the American labour market (Auer and Cazes, 2003).

There are some cultural, economic, institutional and demographic variables that explain differences in tenure across countries. Age of the working population influences tenure, the older the country population, the higher the tenure. Also, a growth sector is likely to have a lower average tenure than a mature one. Economies with high rate of small firms are more likely to have lower average of tenure than those where the share of large firms is higher. Factors such as unionization also

influence the flexibility of the employment relationship, unionized workers have longer tenure than non-unionized workers (Auer et al., 2004).

Regarding managerial roles, one of the main studies was developed by Nicholson and West (1988) in 1983. In their survey of 2,300 managers in the UK, the authors found that three years was the average duration of job tenure and nearly two thirds of the managers surveyed were with their fourth employer (Nicholson and West, 1988).

Careers show different patterns of movement, from job change to career transitions within and across firms to occupational change. What follows is a description of job mobility, also referred to as career transitions, which includes typologies and the factors associated with them as well as the individuals' reasons for career changes.

Louis (1980) defined career transitions as 'the period during which an individual is either changing roles (taking on a different objective role) or changing orientation to a role already held (altering a subjective state)' (Louis, 1980, p. 330). Her definition encompasses both objective and subjective career transitions. *Changes* refer to the differences in the objective features of the old and new roles, and *contrasts* to those transitions personally perceived and subjective in nature. In accordance, Ibarra (2005) defines career change as a 'subset of work-role transitions that include a change of employers together with some degree of change in the actual work role and a subjective sense of moving into a new and different line of work (Ibarra, 2005, p.7).

Different authors have tried to classify career transitions and different criteria have been used (Louis, 1980; Thomas, 1980; Watts, 1981; Latack, 1984; Nicholson and West, 1988). Louis proposed a typology and a process model of career transitions that have been cited until now. Her typology of career transitions encompassed two types: Inter-role and intra-role transitions. Inter-role transitions are those in which an existing role is exchanged for a role that is substantively different in some way, such as workforce entry or re-entry, intra-organisational transitions, inter-organisational transitions, inter-profession transitions and workforce exit. Intra-role transitions

occur when an individual adopts a new and different orientation to an existing role, for example in intra-role adjustment, extra-role adjustment, career-stage transitions and life-stage transitions. Louis' classification is useful because it encompasses both objective and subjective transitions in careers and it has been an important reference until now.

Focused on the objective aspect of career, Nicholson and West (1988) propose a classification of job moves combining dimensions of changes in employer (E), function (F) and status (\uparrow upward status change, \downarrow downward status change and = No status change). They identified the following twelve different kinds of moves (with their symbol code): In spiralling ($\uparrow F$), Out-spiralling ($E \uparrow F$), in lateral ($= F$), promotion (\uparrow), out and up ($E \uparrow$), out lateral ($E = F$), drop-out shift ($E \downarrow F$), out-transfer (E), job reorder ($=$), drop shift ($\downarrow F$), out-demotion ($E \downarrow$), in-demotion (\downarrow). This typology helped the authors to assess the frequency and magnitude of movements and their influence in the process of career adjustment. In their research Nicholson and West (1988) found that the majority of job moves (more than a half of all job moves) were what they called radical moves, those involving changes in status, functions and employer. In contrast incremental job moves, such as promotions were relatively uncommon (less than one in ten movements).

When analysing the predictor factors of mobility, the same authors conclude that mobility rates are related to biographical and occupational factors. In their research they found that older managers have had more employers in their career lifetime and younger managers have experienced more rapid change than older managers. Veiga (1981) agreed with Nicholson and West's results in the sense that career mobility is highest at the beginning of managerial careers and decreases gradually over its span. Also, those who described themselves as a 'specialist' change employers more than 'generalist'. Regarding firm, Nicholson and West (1988) found a consistent tendency for managers from small organizations to have made the greatest number of employer changes and upward movement status. This is confirmed by a more recent study in Danish context which concluded that middle managers in the smallest enterprises seem to be more mobile than middle managers from other size categories

(Hjalager, 2003). Another important contingency in career patterns is organisational structure. The non-radical movements and continuous career are more frequent in large bureaucratic organisations than in other organisation types (Nicholson and West, 1988).

Schein (as cited in Schein, 1996) developed a model of organisational career based on objective movements that stated the reciprocal influence individual-organisation. In his model the organisation is represented as a three dimensional space like a cylinder and the three dimensions of the cylinder represent three types of moves a person can follow within the organisation: vertical or those across hierarchical boundaries; radial which separate groups according their degree of 'centrality' within the organisation (so the moves can lead people in a more or less central or influential position); and circumferential or movements across functional boundaries that reflect lateral moves to a different function, program or product. Schein argued that the type of movements influences the career prospects of individuals. He hypothesized that the influence of the organisation on the individual (socialization) would be greatest prior to and during the boundary passages and that the individual's influence on the organisation (innovation) would be greatest when no boundary changes are anticipated. Empirical analysis showed that in order to maximize promotion prospects it is advisable for the managers to work with a large product division of the company, in an influential function avoiding overspecialization (Schein, as cited in Schein, 1996; Hall, 1986).

At this stage it is possible to suggest that there are different ways to classify career movements and the existing classifications help to assess the magnitude of change, variable that is argued to be closely related to the process of adjustment in transitions. When analyzing the types of job changes, the causes involved in the transitions add new elements to their comprehension.

In addition, individual mobility appears to be related to different factors such as company size, degree of specialization, age and stage of career to name just a few.

Work history can be organised into diverse career patterns. Career patterns are based on objective movements (number, quality or types) and in terms of the dominant reasons that drive these movements (Nicholson and West, 1988; Sullivan, Carden and Martin, 1998).

There is a wide range of reasons for job changes that derive from organisational decisions, structural changes in the labour market and individual needs. Based specifically on the individual differences of reasons for job change, Schein (as cited in Schein in 1996) proposed the concept of career anchor as a way to explain the pattern of the reasons people gave regarding their decisions in their careers. From his longitudinal study on 44 MBA graduate students, Schein identified five career anchors: technical or functional competence (individuals that organised their careers around technical areas and were not interested in management), managerial competence (individuals were seeking opportunities for managerial positions with higher responsibilities), security and stability (interest for continuity in the employment and stability), creativity (need to create something), autonomy and independence (need to develop an autonomous career and being less willing to work in large organisations). These career anchors act as guides in career decisions and tend to remain along the career. There has been some support to Schein's conceptualization of career anchors (Schein, 1996).

Another proposal is the one from Thomas (1980) who created a typology for career change focused on mid-life. After a research in a sample of 73 men, he identified two critical dimensions: the degree to which individuals felt external pressure to undertake a change and the personal desire to make a change. From the combination of both dimensions he formulated four categories: individuals who experience low external pressure to leave their careers and who were not really motivated to leave them; those who are under low external pressure to leave but were themselves highly motivated to leave; those who are unmotivated to change but are under external pressure to move, and finally those under high internal and external pressure to make a change. Thomas built his classification based on dimensions of internality or

externality in the decisions of job change, which appear frequently in the developments on the topic.

In their research in UK managers, Nicholson and West (1988) found high diversity in the causes for the last job change in the male population in their study (Nicholson and West, 1988, p.84). They grouped these reasons into broader types of motives: circumstantial (e.g. the move to a different location, end of a contract, child rearing), avoidance (e.g. I saw no future for me in my job, things I dislike about my company/job) and future oriented (e.g. to improve my standard of living, to acquire new skills, to do something more challenging and fulfilling and a step towards career objectives). In their research, most managers explain their job changes as future oriented, the top five reasons are all proactive positive moves towards desired futures. A much smaller number of reasons were avoidance moves or job changes to escape undesired circumstances.

Based on the objective changes in career as well as the reasons for change people mentioned, Nicholson and West (1988) distinguished four different types of career paths: orderly, self-directed, externally-directed and impeded career paths. Orderly career paths depict predictable careers that do not involve radical changes or choices and imply either a steady progression in an organisation or profession or rapid upward moves within an organisation. Generally someone's profession, occupation or organisation determines the overall career course. Self-directed career paths represent careers that are more internally driven including a variety of experiences in different kinds of settings. The authors stressed the personal criteria of success of these types of career. Externally-directed career paths are those that have been led by external conditions instead of personal interests. At the same time external forces have not imposed any evident order on careers. It implies an opportunistic view of careers where the decisions are taken randomly or in order to fit in someone else's needs (such as family needs). Impeded career paths are those which stop progressing and reach a plateau. It includes personal feelings of being 'stuck' in the present position.

Also in the UK, and based on the type of transition and the use of previous training and experience a new position requires, Watts (1981) distinguished six kinds of job changes: sequential, lateral, regressive, spiralist, augmenting and recycling types.

Sullivan et al. (1998) identified four types of career based on two dimensions: the degree of transferability of competences (that is how portable or organisation-specific an individual's knowledge, skills and abilities are) and the level of internal work values (that is the type of relatively stable goals individuals attempt to achieve through their careers, such as seek self-fulfilment or extrinsic outcomes). According to these dimensions, Sullivan et al. (1998) elaborate a grid in which four career types are identified according their position on the grid (in brackets): traditional career (1.1), self-directed career (9.1), self-designing career (9.9), and provisional career (1.9).

Individuals with a *traditional career* type show attachment to their organisation, they tend to develop competences that are more firm- specific and their central work values focus on extrinsic rewards such as promotions and salary increases. The authors argue that this group probably have entered the firm early in their working lives and have been socialized by the firm's strong culture. Individuals with *self-directed* careers have organisation's specific competences, however, the central work value is self-fulfilment. They have stronger identification with their profession, rather than the organisation, and they look for challenge and job satisfaction within a limited number of firms. Individuals with a *self-designing* career have highly portable competencies and focus on self-fulfilment. Key components of this type of career are change, horizontal moves and learning and individuals are able and willing to adapt their competencies in order to fit the needs of an employer who requires their services at a particular time. This type resembles the free agent with portable skills. Their role identification comes predominantly from their profession rather than organisational membership. Individuals with a *provisional career* are typically long-term temporary employees. They have highly portable skills and focus on extrinsic rewards. Provisional careerist move from organisation to organisation as

their skills are needed. In early conceptualizations of career this group would have not considered having a career.

The classifications presented above categorize career patterns according to types of movements and/or reason for changes. There is a wide variety in both, moves and causes. The dimensions of objective moves consider direction (vertical or lateral), status (upward, downward, equal), setting (intra or inter organisational), roles (inter or intraroles) and temporality (socialization in early career or changes in later stages). In terms of reasons for job change, the dimensions vary mainly amongst internal, external or avoiding causes and according to dominant career anchors (Schein, 1996). Combining the type of movements and the reason for job changes diverse classifications of career path have been proposed (Nicholson and West, 1988; Sullivan et al., 1998).

The previous analysis suggests that careers cannot be analysed by only focusing on their objective aspects. Individuals' experiences account to great extent in career variability and subjective aspects seem to be crucial in the understanding of how careers unfold.

3.6 Career adjustment

Different authors have addressed the process of adjustment in career transitions (Nicholson and West, 1988; Hall, 1986) and within it issues of identity have been highlighted (Ibarra, 1999, 2005; Ashforth, 1998; Bridges, 2004). General processes of career transition are described below and since identity is a core component of this research it will be developed in more depth later.

Nicholson and West (1988; 1989) and Nicholson (1990) proposed a cycle of four stages that describe the different phases and challenges people encounter in the experienced of career change. The first phase is described as a period of anticipation or preparation for the change; in the second the encounter with the novel situation occurs and it tends to be experienced as highly stressful; in the third or adjustment

phase, the worker is either socialized to fit into the new situation or he or she shapes the environment to meet his or her individual needs. The final phase of the cycle is stabilization dominated by relaxing.

The transition cycle proposed by Nicholson and West (1988) has a non-normative character in the sense that it does not prescribe that certain experiences will or will not occur and it is recursive since someone is always at some point on the cycle and the experience in one phase influences of what happens next. As a result of the transition process the authors highlight the two possible consequences: personal changes or role innovation and the combination of these two dimensions generate four adjustment modes: replication (little change in the individual and little moulding of the new role); absorption (little moulding of the new role but significant personal change), determination (little personal change but significant role innovation) and exploration (both the role and the person are changed through the process of adjustment). This classification describes the relative influence of the individuals or the situation in the adaptation to the career change.

Literature on career transitions also stresses the dimension of magnitude as a key variable influencing the process of adjustment in a transition (Louis, 1980; Nicholson and West, 1989; Latack, 1984). Magnitude of career transition can be estimated according to the degree of novelty, that is the difference in tasks, skills and methods between jobs; learning, or the requirement to develop new skills; and transfer, that is the opportunity to use previously acquired skills (Nicholson and West, 1989). There is empirical evidence that the more elements that are different in the new situation or role, the more the person has to cope with (Louis, 1980; Nicholson and West, 1988).

Latack (1984) developed an objective and perceptual measure of magnitude of career transition from the number and intensity of change involved in an intraorganisational career transition. The magnitude of a career transition could range from a change of job alone to a change of job which is accompanied by changes in organizational level (up or down), function, occupation, and occupational field. In terms of intensity of change, a job change alone is viewed as the least intense and a change in

occupational field is viewed as the most intense. Therefore, the magnitude of a career transition increases as the number and intensity of the changes increases.

Career change can be described in terms of its magnitude and there is agreement that this variable influences the process of adjustment. The adjustment for some authors follows a sequence of stages whose outcomes consider individual's changes or/and transformations in the context in which the transition takes place. There is agreement that career change prompts the individual to undergo personal changes (Nicholson, 1990; Latack, 1984; Louis, 1980; Hall, 1986) and that the experience of transition is inextricably tied to identity changes.

3.7 Overview

This section presents the evolution of careers and the different theoretical approaches in their study. It attempts to give a perspective about how careers unfold in the current organisational environment and to what extent empirical findings match with new theoretical formulations.

Current career literature emphasises a new type of career which can be described as fragmented and which does not follow any predicted route. Data of mobility in part confirm these propositions. Thus, in this new scenario, traditional life-span career development theories would not be supported. New theoretical developments have taken place. Protean career (Hall, 1986) and boundaryless career (Arthur, 1994) are among the most cited. The assumption of sequential learning cycles in which career unfolds, in opposition to the linear classical formulation, seems to receive theoretical approval even though there is a lack of empirical research on the topic.

Mobility rates, tenure and career patterns are among the objective measures that provide useful information to understand how careers unfold in the current work context. A range of empirical research has addressed these aspects, however the findings cannot be extrapolated since there are several contextual factors that should be taken into account. Economic development, work culture, characteristics of the

labour market, as well as types and characterisation of the firms are among the many factors that might influence career mobility.

Empirical research on the topic has been focused mainly on developed countries. In Chile data of the workforce are focused basically on the secondary labour market and on younger population since they are currently in a riskier position compared to other age groups. Even though there are studies regarding Chilean organisational culture, there is no information of how this issue influences mobility rates. In addition, there is no data available about the pattern of mobility in Chilean managers and research regarding perceptions or subjective aspects of career is also lacking.

The new type of career stresses its subjective dimensions and the individual is seen as protagonist with a dominant role in defining his or her career course. What this research wants to address is the role of identity in the process of career development.

To understand the mutual influence of identity and career development, the concept of career identity is suggested. Based on recent approaches of identity, career identity is configured and delineated, and a conceptual proposal is presented.

IV

Career Identity

This research attempts to understand how issues of identity in the context of career interact with mobility and consequently with employability. The concept of career identity seems to give account of the complexity of identity within the career domain and how it evolves along the work cycle. Identity and its transformations are explored in this chapter.

After reviewing literature from psychology and social psychological theories of the self, the concept of career identity is delineated and a provisional definition is attempted. Based on the model of levels of self proposed by Brewer and Gardner (1996) career identity is organised as a tripartite entity, comprised by an individual, relational and collective levels.

Thereafter, following the rationale of the human need for an 'extended sense of self' (Baumeister, 1986; Aron and McLaughlin-Volpe, 2001) and the notion of collective identity (Brewer and Gardner, 1996), processes of social identification are explored. These derive from Identity Theory (Stryker, 1987) and Social Identity Theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1986) and the applications of these theories in the organisational field are included in this analysis. Thus, issues of organisational identification (Mael and Ashforth, 1992), professional identification and the need for organisational identification (Glynn, 1998) are explored as a means to understand how social objects are subsumed within individual's career identity.

4.1 Career Identity in the context of the new career

An introductory framework of identity is provided in order to facilitate its later application in the context of work and career.

The main developments in the concept of identity are attributed to Erickson (1950) who stated that the achievement of the mature identity was the main task in the adolescence and that identity was conformed by the identifications individuals had had along their lives.

More recently, Baumeister (1986) who has extensively worked on the studies of the self, discusses the philosophical approaches to identity and its transformations along different historical periods of time. He sees identity as 'a definition, an interpretation of the self' (Baumeister, 1986, p.4) and proposes a model of identity to provide a more comprehensive view. In his model of identity Baumeister makes explicit two defining criteria of identity: continuity and differentiation. Any characteristic (e.g. gender, race, nationality, traits, political, religious or any group affiliation) is part of someone's identity if they provide unity across time (such as gender or profession) and also if they differentiate someone from others (again, one's gender and profession allow people to differentiate themselves from others, although each one to different extent). So self-representations that form part of someone's identity are those that are distinctive, with some degree of continuity.

Recent social psychological views of the self proposed a multifaceted self-concept comprised by a variety of self-representations that can take many forms: images, schemas, conceptions and so on (Markus and Wurf, 1987). In this sense, the components of the definition of the self in Baumeister's terms correspond to the more recent notion of self-representations.

Baumeister (1986) includes in his model the functions of identity. First of all, he asserted that identity provides a structure of values and priorities that helps people to make choices. If someone has a well-defined identity it is easier to select among a variety of possibilities. Also, identity allows for satisfactory relationships, that is, provides information about the roles people take and their reputation in front of others. The third functional aspect of identity refers to the notion of individual potentiality or a sense of actual and future possibilities. Having a well defined identity provides an idea of what can be achieved.

People ascribe to themselves a variety of labels referred to as components or units of self-definitions (self-representation in more recent views) which vary in terms of relevance. Thus, there are major and minor components of identity, view that resembles the notion of identity salience (Stryker, 1987), explained later in this chapter.

The self-definition process is the method of acquiring identity components. Baumeister (1986) indicated that in modern societies this components can be assigned (e.g. gender), achieved by a single event (e.g. motherhood), achieved in accordance to the degree of matching with one standard (e.g. wealth), as a result of personal options with clear guidelines that assist the selection (e.g. religion) or a result of personal options with no clear criteria of what is better (e.g. career). According to the author the last two types of self-definition processes are the most complex because there is no single criterion for making options and people need to look into themselves and find out what to choose within many exclusive options.

In the absence of the traditional components of identity such as religion, family linkage, gender, occupation, and so on, the new sources of identity should be found in other components. Among those components Baumeister (1986) cites personality and ownership. Personality helps to provide self-definition distinguishing the person from others and giving them certain continuity. Ownership means that the self is defined through material acquisitions, a condition that nowadays seems to be an important source of identity. Personal achievements and participation in some organisations or activities are also considered a means of self-definition.

Different authors mention the condition of mature, 'well defined' or 'well rounded' identity (Erikson, 1950; Baumeister, 1986; McAdams, 1996). They agree in the view of identity as a collection of integrated attributes that direct behaviour and provide a sense of direction when pursuing goals. Baumeister (1986) states that a well-defined identity shows a unique combination of many identity components, 'it is the number and diversity that create the differentiation in which identity is based' (Baumeister,

1986, p.138). More recently, McAdams (1996) stresses that the self in adulthood should integrate the diversity of roles they play, the different values and skills individuals have and organise them into a meaningful pattern 'the reconstructed past, perceived present and anticipated future' (McAdams, 1995; 1996).

Work is an important context for the expression of identity and the new approaches to career are linked with the image of self and personal identity (Hall, 1986). Having a rewarding career experience requires people to achieve a clear sense of identity. A clear structure of values and priorities facilitates the multiple choices involved in the career course.

Traditionally different theorists have used the self-concept as a central organizing construct in examining career development. Early developmental career theories such as Super's considers career as a development of the self-concept (1957). Later, Hall's (1986) approach to understanding careers within the emerging employment relationship is based on the individual's construction of identity. He proposes that career development occurs as the identity becomes larger and more differentiated and as it adds a richer arrangement of skills, knowledge, abilities, values, experiences, motifs and so on. Hall argues that career development is 'the creation of new aspects of the self in relation to the career' (Hall, 1986). He considers personal learning, the learning about the self or one's identity, as key cognitive learning derived from career experience. The influence of identity is even higher in the context of the new career, as Hall and Mirvis pointed out, in the new form of career the goal is "a process of exploring and developing identity" (1996, p.33).

Employability demands modern employees to continually explore both the internal and the external job markets; however, as it was stated before, job changes are periods of trial that can be a threat to the sense of self. The adjustment to a career change implies a process of personal change in which the individual has to go through minor or major identity transmutations to accommodate the demands of new roles (Hall and Mirvis, 1995; Nicholson and West, 1988; Ibarra, 1999). This research is aimed at exploring how the identity, developed through work experiences,

interacts with intentions and real job mobility and how career identity influences perceived employability.

Despite the fact that career identity is not a well-defined notion some new views of the concept agree that it is an important energizer for the process of career development (Hall, 1986; Fugate et al., 2004).

London (1983) developed the most known conceptualization of career identity. He constructed a model of career motivation in which the variables relevant to career motivation form a set of dimensions clustered into three domains. These domains are career resilience, career insight and career identity. Career identity indicates the direction of career motivation; career insight and resilience reflect the arousal, strength and persistence of career motivation.

In London's model, career identity was conceptualized as a measure of the importance of the career to an individual's personal identity. He stated that career identity consists of two subdomains, work involvement and the desire for upward mobility; and that those individuals who are high on career identity are likely to find career satisfaction more important than satisfaction from other areas of life (London, 1983).

London's conceptualization of career identity resembles the concept of career salience that is explained later in this chapter and does not express all the variety and complexity inherent in the self in the context of work and career. New developments in the relationship between selfhood and work are needed. What follows is an attempt to configure a more comprehensive approach to career identity. Theories of the self are analyzed (e.g. Markus and Wurf, 1987) as well as sociological Identity Theory (Striker, 1987) and psycho social theories such as Social Identity Theory-SIT (Tajfel and Turner, 1986) whose primary interest resides on the social aspects of identity. Derived from these latter lines of work, some studies of identification in the organisational context (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Hogg and Terry, 2001a) are presented.

Self theorists are focused on the person's sense of unique identity as differentiated from others and they appear to be converging on a notion of the self-concept as containing a variety of representations. As an example, Markus and Wurf (1987) emphasize the view of the self-concept as a multidimensional, multifaceted, dynamic structure, comprised by a 'collection of self-representations (or schemas, conceptions, images) arranged into a space, confederation or systems' (Markus and Wurf, 1987, p.301). These representations can be demographic characteristics, traits, feelings, roles and so on and they differ among them in terms of their importance, positivity or negativity as well as their temporal orientation. Some self representations can be more salient and elaborated than others and also they can refer to the positive or negative aspects of the self. In the temporal domain some denote to the here-and-now experience while others depict the self in the past and future configuring the actual self and the possible self (Markus and Wurf, 1987). The notion of self-representation allows an understanding of the components of identity and career identity.

A more comprehensive framework for the conceptualization of career identity is the proposal of Brewer and Gardner (1996). They developed a tripartite model of self that distinguishes among three levels of self-representations according their degree of inclusiveness. The three levels are the individuated or personal self, the relational self and the collective self. The personal level refers to the elements of the self-concept that differentiate the self from others and give someone a unique character; the relational self is the self-concept derived from connections and role relationships with significant others and the collective self reflect assimilation into significant social groups.

Using the three levels of self-representations proposed by Brewer and Gardner (1996), career identity comprises at the first level (the personal or individuated self) the traits and characteristics people confer to themselves as part of their self-definition in the career domain and which distinguish them from others. At this level,

people would define themselves in ways such as 'I am hardworking', 'I am ambitious' and so on.

The personal level of the self at career agrees with the proposition of Fugate et al. (2004) who suggest that career identity can be understood as one's self-definition in the career context which includes goals, hopes, and fears; personality traits; values, beliefs and norms; interaction styles; time horizons and so on (Fugate et al., 2004, p.17).

The second level of self describes the relational self and includes social roles and reputation in the minds of other people. Brewer and Gardner refer to this level (as well as the collective self level) as 'the extended self-concept' (Brewer and Gardner, 1996, p. 84) or social extensions of the self which represent a shift from the 'I' to the 'we'. In the career context, the relational self would include identities derived from membership in small face to face groups, teams or dyadic relationships such as coworker-coworker, or supervisor-subordinate. At this level the career identity could be represented as 'I am a manager', 'I am Peter's boss'.

The final level describes the collective self, composed of the social categories to which we belong, including gender, religion, organisation, professional groups, among many others. As Brewer and Gardner (1996) point out, collective social identities do not require personal relationship as relational identities do and both differ between them in their degree of inclusiveness. To this level of representation corresponds the concept of social identity described by SIT (Tajfel and Turner, 1986) and Identity Theory (Stryker, 1987) which argue that an individual's identity stems from the groups someone belongs to, so in the career domain the identity could be represented as the sense of belonging to an organisation (e.g. 'I am a textile worker') or profession, among other groups.

According to Brewer and Gardner (1996) some roles can be experienced in terms of relational identity or in a more general social category. For example, the profession

of medical doctor can be experienced in terms of the relationship doctor-patient, or in terms of the social group of medical professionals.

To summarize, career identity in this research is defined as an aggregate of self-representations related to the work domain that people ascribe to themselves. The conceptualization of career identity is based on the notion of levels of self-representations from Brewer and Gardner (1996) and includes idiosyncratic and personal aspects of the self (personal self) as well as the elements someone has internalized as part of the identification with larger social objects (relational and collective self).

The scheme of self-representations at personal, relational and collective self helps to organize the varied range of self definitions people give to themselves in the work context.

The next section depicts the notion of enlarged self or the role that group membership plays in someone's self-concept.

4.2 The collective level of self in career identity and the role of social identification

The collective level of self (Brewer and Gardner, 1996) represents an extended sense of self in which social objects are included in someone's identity. In the context of career, social groups are represented for organisations, departments, teams, professional groups and so on.

In order to understand the processes underlying the identification with the groups someone belongs to, some theoretical developments are presented.

The social aspect of the self, the social self or collective self have been the major focus of the Identity Theory (Stryker, 1987) and SIT (Tajfel and Turner, 1986) and the analysis of social identity issues has its main development in these theories.

According to the identity theory (Stryker, 1987), the self is made up of identities or internalized role designations that emerge from people's roles in society. In identity theory the person has as many identities as roles played and these identities differ in their degree of salience according to the person's commitment to the role. So the self is conceived as a structure of identities in a hierarchy of salience (Stryker, 1987).

A similar approach to compose career identity concept derives from Social Identity Theory, SIT (Tajfel and Turner, 1986). According to SIT, the self-concept is composed of salient group classifications and it is the membership to a group that gives someone a particular identity. The social categories to which one belongs (nationality, race, organisation) provide a definition of *who* one is. People derive their identity or sense of self largely from the social categories to which they belong. Each person over the course of his or her personal history is member of a unique combination of social categories; therefore the set of social identities making up the person's self-concept is also unique (Hogg and Terry, 2001b).

Identity in SIT involves the operation of two underlying sociocognitive processes: categorization and self-enhancement. Categorization is the process by which people establish intergroup boundaries mainly through stereotypical perceptions. Self-enhancement guides the social categorization process such that in-group norms and stereotypes largely favour the in-group, so the comparison with out-groups increases member's sense of self-worth (Ashforth and Johnson, 2001). Both processes help to explain the disposition and degree of identification with specific groups.

Theoretical formulations of organisational identification stem from SIT. Different authors have defined organisational identification and they all agree with the view that organisational identification can be defined as people perceiving themselves in terms of the organisations they work for.

Based on SIT, Mael and Ashforth (1992) stated that organisational identification is a specific form of social identification where the 'individual defines him or herself in terms of their membership in a particular organisation' (Mael and Ashforth, 1992, p.

105). Pratt suggests that organisational identification occurs when 'an individual's beliefs about his or her organization becomes self-referential or self-defining. That is, organisational identification occurs when one comes to integrate beliefs about one's organization into one's identity' (Pratt, 1998 p. 172).

Organisational Identification has also been defined as the degree to which a member defines him or herself by the same attributes that he or she believes define the organization (Dutton, Dukerich and Harquail, 1994). So, organisational identification varies in terms of their intensity. When organisational identification is strong, an employee's self-concept has incorporated a 'large part of what he or she believes is distinctive, central and enduring about the organisation into what he or she believes is distinctive, central and enduring about him or herself' (Dutton et al., 1994, p. 242).

Strong organisational identification has been associated with tenure and satisfaction (Hall, Schneider and Nygren, 1970; Mael and Ashforth, 1992). Also, Dutton et al. (1994) propose that the strength of the organisational identification influences positively on the search for contact with the organisation, the competitive behaviour through out-group members and organisational citizenship behaviours. A strong identification also implies that a member's organisational identity is salient and valued and therefore, difficult to change (Ashforth, 1998).

The perception of the outsiders of the organisation influences the outcomes of the identification and thus, organisational identification can be translated into feelings of shame (Dutton et al., 1994). Among other negative consequences of organisational identification, Dutton et al. (1994) indicate that people can develop a strong identification with an organisation and submerge their other identities and become very vulnerable if, for example, they are laid off or their identities are threatened. Hogg and Terry (2001b) stated that over identification could lead to lack of organisational flexibility, individual vulnerability and a 'decrease of creativity and risk taking, and the loss of an independent sense of self' (Hogg and Terry, 2001b, p.16).

Professional identification operates in similar way. Professional identity (a type of role-based identity) is the sum of goals, values, beliefs, norms, interaction styles and time horizons that are typically associated with a profession (Ashforth and Mael, 1989) and professional identification occurs when a person defines himself or herself at least partly in terms of the profession and its identity. The more valued the profession and its identity, the more likely it will be internalized as an extension and expression of oneself.

Social Identity literature suggests that several factors can increase the likelihood of identification with groups. Aspects such as distinctiveness of the group in relation to other comparable groups, their prestige and the salience of the out-group can reinforce the tendency to identify. Ashforth and Mael (1989) predict that identification is more likely in organisations that are highly prestigious and have attractive images. Also, in those that have an identity that increases members' self-esteem (Dutton et al., 1994).

There are other conditions that influence the disposition to identify with groups. Rosseau (1998) made a distinction that adds elements to the employee-employer relationship that should be taken into account in the analysis of organisational identification. She distinguishes between situated identification and deep structure identification. Situated identification is an elemental form of identification 'a perception of a discrete work setting, created by situational cues signalling shared interest and maintains as long as the cues persist' (p.218). On the other hand, structure identification occurs when 'the employment relationship alters the mental model individuals have of themselves to incorporate the organisation itself. Such organisational identification can form part of an individual's self-concept by altering individual's mental models of self in enduring ways' (p.218). Deep structure identification differs from situated identification in that the latter exists only when situational cues signal it, while deep structure, once created is sustained across situations and roles.

This differentiation between situated and structured identification leads Rousseau to state different postulates. She suggests that frequent organisational changes, such as mergers and acquisitions, low tenure or other conditions typical from dynamic environments may impede deep structure identification. She also argues that core and full time employees are more likely to develop deep structure identification. In addition, organisational changes that reinforce identification tend to be more accepted than those that do not (Rousseau, 1998).

Some authors speculate that there might be individual differences in the disposition to identify with groups. In the case of the identification with organisations, the concept of the need of organisational identification (nOID) was proposed by Glynn (Glynn, 1998). She defined nOID as 'an individual's need to maintain a social identity derived from membership in a larger, more impersonal general social category of a particular collective' (p.239). The author stated the differences between nOID and related concepts such as need of affiliation and commitment and proposed that nOID is positively associated with receptivity to identify as organisational member, desired to be 'imprinted upon' by an organisation and openness to organisational socialization. The need of organisational identification might be negatively associated with desire for separateness from organisation and resistance to organisational identification (Glynn, 1998). Later on, Ashforth and Kreiner (2004) operationalized the concept of nOID and tested it empirically.

In the study of careers, theorists have highlighted the role of the self-concept. Recent conceptualizations have recognised the role of 'the other' in personal identity and the membership to social groups as self-defining. In this research it is suggested that social identification, particularly organisational and professional identifications, provides some input to understand career behaviour and specifically mobility along careers. It could be hypothesized that social identification might influence the disposition to change roles, affecting personal employability.

4.3 Identity Salience and the relationship among different levels of self

The relationship between the three levels of self proposed in Brewer and Gardner's tripartite model (individual, relational and collective self) has been the object of long debate (Sedikies and Brewer, 2001). How the three levels interact and the relative salience of each is a key area in this research since it provides information about the relationship between self-representations and career course.

Some authors claim that individuals' need to create a self as a unified entity in which multiple identities come to converge as in Erikson's theory (1950). The same view, however in more flexible terms, is the one held by McAdams (1996) who postulates that the main role of identity is the achievement of unity and purpose in human lives. Other scholars have proposed that in late modernity and post-modernity the ideal of a unified self is unrealistic and instead they claim for multiples selves in constant change and of contradictory tendencies (Markus and Wurf, 1987; Gergen, 1991).

Despite the previous controversy, what has been object of recent consensus is the multiplicity of selves, the simultaneous coexistence of multiple identities and the changing nature of self-definition (Sedikies and Brewer, 2001). Moreover, some authors mention the notion of 'kaleidoscopic self' (Deaux and Perkins, 2001) in which the features of the self can be viewed and experienced differently depending on contextual variables. Deaux and Perkins (2001) see the relationship between the three levels of self as dynamic, so in expressing their sense of self people may put relational aspects to the forefront at certain times, collective aspects at another, or merge all three types of self- representations in other occasions.

The interplay of self-representations in the work setting is addressed by Ashforth and Johnson (2001) using the concept of identity salience and nested identities. Salience is defined as the probability that a given identity will be invoked (Stryker, 1987). Multiple identities can be ranked in a 'salience hierarchy' according to their relative relevance. The authors argue that the salience of identity is determined by the identity's subjective importance and situational relevance. A subjectively important

identity is one that is highly relevant to someone's goals and values. To define a situation as identity-relevant people should have opportunities to enact the identity and to retain and recall identity-related and identity-consistent information.

Ashforth and Johnson (2001) state that some identities are nested or embedded within others (e.g. organisation, department, team work) and thus they can be differentiated between lower and higher order identities according to their position towards the bottom or top (organisational identification is higher order identity, group identification is lower order). Nested identities vary in terms of three dimensions: inclusive/exclusive, abstract/concrete and distal/proximal. Higher order identities (such as organisational identity) tend to be more inclusive, abstract and distal than lower order identities (group identity). Because lower order identities are more exclusive, concrete and proximal than higher order identities, authors hypothesized that they are more salient.

Ashforth and Johnson (2001) speculate that an organization's identity is likely to remain more subjectively important than lower order identities (for example, work group identity) if the organization is more or less uniquely associated with particular values and goals, very high status, holographic rather than ideographic (where subunits have a common identity rather than differentiated identities) or 'chronically and severely threatened by external forces' (Ashforth and Johnson, 2001, p.37).

In the lowest rank of the hierarchy of identities there are personal identities and the authors suggest that in the current work context personal identities might be more salient than group or job identities. Flexible work arrangements and the view of employees as contingent workers for limited time periods promote many individuals to adopt a free agent identity, where they develop skills that are no longer tied to a specific organisation. As the authors have expressed 'as individuals become more self-centred and self-directed in their careers, the social identities becomes less salient relative to their personal identities, their portable self' (Ashforth and Johnson, 2001, p.45).

The understanding of the relative salience among multiple identities (e.g. organisational, professional, work group identification, among others), is expected to provide information of the role of career identity in mobility and consequently in employability.

4.4 Overview

This chapter attempted to conceptualize the career identity construct. After reviewing literature from psychology and social psychology, Brewer and Gardner's model of the three levels of self provides a useful framework to understand career identity.

Career identity is proposed here as an aggregate of self-representations in the work domain organised at three levels: the individual, relational and collective levels of self. Within these three levels reside the units of self-definition, however in constant interplay.

The individual level of self refers to the traits and general characteristics people ascribed to themselves as part of their self-definition. The relational and collective levels refer to an extended sense of self in which dyadic relationships and groups are incorporated into someone's career identity. The notion of an 'enlarged and differentiated' identity (Hall, 1986; Rosseau, 1998) refers to the expansion in the way individuals think about themselves by including larger sets of social objects.

This extended sense of self has been widely supported (Brewer and Gardner, 1996; Sedikides and Brewer, 2001) and it found theoretical approval from social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1986) and identity theory (Stryker, 1987). The application of these theories in organisational contexts (Mael and Ashforth, 1992) allows a better understanding of the processes of social identification at work, specifically organisational and professional identifications and their influence in career behaviour.

There is an agreement that components of identities are organised into a hierarchy of salience and their defining criteria are multiple, stemming from the organisational or individual characteristics, such as organisation identity strength or the need for organisational identification. For the purposes of this research, the relative salience between organisational and professional identification appears relevant since it represents two different approaches to career that might influence differently how careers are forged, the degree of career mobility real and expected and consequently individuals' personal employability.

In the current work context characterised by the unpredictability of institutions, some authors argue in favour of a renewed emphasis on individuality and the primacy of personal identity rather than the identity derived from social membership.

Narrative construction of identity and narrative accounts of career

The configuration of career identity based on the three levels of self proposed by Brewer and Gardner (1995) helps in the understanding of identity issues at theoretical and empirical levels. Moreover, it provides a scheme of analysis that helps to organise the wide array of ways in which people define themselves at work. At the same time, the three levels of self offer a means to classify the relative salience of the diverse self-representations at work.

However, this model has not taken identity in the career context as its main focus of analysis. Nevertheless its usefulness, this conceptualization of career identity does not emphasise the function of continuity and change that characterises identity and does not take into account the evolving nature of career identity. This model organised identity at specific points of time, and does not inform about its longitudinal character.

It is because of this missing link that it is necessary to look at a more integrative approach, one that while realising the multiple and changing nature of identity, allows understanding of how different experiences and events along the work life at some point configure a specific career identity.

The narrative approach to career identity seems to be valuable to understand the evolving nature of career identity and to inform how the past, present and future come to shape identity in the career context. Careers are best understood over a period of time, approaching them as a 'movie', that is, as a series of events that come to a certain end, rather than as a 'snapshot' or a static view at one point in time.

What follows is a descriptive analysis of the narrative approach in the social sciences in order to provide a framework to understand how narrative has been applied to the configuration of adult identity and the study of careers.

5.1 Narrative understanding in the social sciences

Narrative is considered by Bruner (1986) as one of the two modes of thought or cognitive processes of particular importance for understanding human functioning (Bruner, 1986; Polkinghorne, 1988). Narrative is the opposite of logic-scientific mode, which Bruner calls 'paradigmatic mode'. In opposition to this form, in the narrative approach there is no aspiration of general rules to predict behaviour, on the contrary it seeks the understanding of a whole experience through looking at the way in which diversity of events are related one to another.

The creation of narratives is embedded in the process of sensemaking (Polkinghorne, 1988; Weick, 1995) that is central to disciplines concerned with human experience and behaviour explanations. Constructing stories is a way of making sense of experiences and life as a whole, but also, the narrative approach implies a form of self-construction or the individual's construction of meaning, knowledge and experience (Bujold, 2004).

Through narrative, different events and human activities are connected to one another in order to make them meaningful and comprehensible as a whole (Polkinghorne, 1988; Riessman, 2002a; 2002b) 2001). Through stories, isolated events are put together in such a way that they become coherent and their contribution to the whole story becomes clear for both the storyteller and the audience.

Narrative refers to the process of making a story and also narrative can be seen as a result or product. What is characteristic of narratives as products is that they have a plot, some characters and certain complexities in the setting, therefore not all talks

and texts are narratives (Riessman 2002b). Even though some authors treat narrative and stories as synonymous (Polkinghorne, 1988), others stress that narrative includes a variety of forms such as autobiographies, biographies, diaries, letters, life histories, life stories; being stories just one of them (Riessman, 2002b).

Narrative form can be characterised by its temporality, social character and meaning (Elliot, 2005). The temporal character of the narratives refers to the fact that narratives are expressed chronologically. Traditionally stories have been considered as being composed of a beginning, a middle and an end (Polkinghorne, 1988), suggesting that people formulate their stories in a temporal succession in which one event is followed by another. This notion of time line is related to causality and meaning; since events are organized along the time, they are understood as one being caused by the other and it is this quality that differentiates stories from a mere chronicle or list of events (Polkinghorne, 1988).

Still looking at the temporal dimension of narratives, Bruner (1986) stresses that the objectives of explanation and prediction from the logic-mathematical approach do not exist in the narrative explanation. In contrast, narrative explanation is retroactive since the explanations come from clarifying the significance of events on the basis of the outcomes that follow them. As Polkinghorne (1988) has suggested, 'this type of outcome does not provide information for the prediction and control of behaviour, instead, it provides a kind of knowledge than individuals and groups can use to increase the power they have over their own actions' (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 10). Bruner (1986) also insists in the value of stories in the understanding of particular experiences. The paradigmatic mode in its search for abstraction loses its strength in explaining the particular, he says that there is 'heartlessness to logic' (p. 13). Narrative mode on the contrary, aims to make sense of particular personal experiences in a specific context.

Regarding the social character of stories, different authors stress the point that stories are inherently social since they are produced for an audience and represent the culture in which the teller is embedded (Polkinghorne, 1988; Gergen, 1991;

Riessman, 2002b; Mishler, 1999; McAdams, 1993). The stories people tell partly reflect the prevailing stories in someone's society and elements in the story inform social values and meanings of the teller. As Riessman (2002b) said, the narrative approach illuminates the intersection of biography, history and society. Stories told by a particular social group are a way of passing on some cultural heritage, such as the socialization process in organisational environments. Polkinghorne (1988) asserts that at the cultural level, narratives serve to give cohesion to shared beliefs and to transmit values. Also, they can have moral functions as in the case of children stories, or can be cautionary tales that serve as a collective reminder of what not to do or how not to be (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996). There is a consensus with Gergen and Gergen's statement that in the stories 'the culture is speaking through the actor' (Gergen and Gergen, 1988).

In the same line, Mishler (1999) highlights the role of the audience in the construction of the narrative and he sees the listener as an active participant in the recounting of a narrative. Mishler's view of narrative is as a co-production through the exchange between interviewer and participant.

Stories are made to convey meaning and the organising theme that identifies the significance of different events and conveys meaning is called the plot of the narrative. The plot, or the story line, is the means by which different events are related to each other composing a whole (Polkinghorne, 1988). The plot is used to configure events into stories. Polkinghorne (1988) adds that without a plot events are just a chronicle, it is the plot that gives them significance in relation to other events.

There can be more than one plot for the same set of events (Polkinghorne, 1988) and different plots can change the meanings of each event because they are interpreted according to their functions in the dominant plot. For example, two people, by incorporating the same kind of life events into different types of stories, alter the signification of these events (Polkinghorne, 1988). This process can be seen as a therapeutic function of stories or what McAdams (1993) refers to as the healing power of stories.

Since stories borrow their forms from the social-cultural environment that people are surrounded, there are a wide variety of plots available. Traditionally in literature it is recognized that there are four general plot forms: comedy, romance, tragedy and irony (McAdams, 1993), each with a different narrative tone. They are used in the narrative analysis as a resource to see patterns and similarities across a diversity of narratives.

5.2 The narrative construction of identity

In order to comprehend how the narrative approach helps in understanding career identity, this section describes some theoretical formulations, mainly from the psychological field, regarding identity issues in modern times and the role of narrative in the process of identity configuration.

Different identity theories, (Erikson, 1950; McAdams, 1996), stress that the process of identity formation looks for the development of a personal sense of sameness and continuity in life. According to Erikson the main sign of maturity is the achievement of a fixed identity. Also, he claimed that the development of identity serves to integrate different identifications in a single structure that provide the individual with a sense of sameness and continuity. Recently, McAdams, 1996 has emphasized something similar when he argues that the main issue of identity is finding coherence and continuity in life.

At the theoretical level some authors have described the nature of the self along different historical periods (Baumeister, 1986) and the challenges that modernity and postmodernity impose to the development of a personal identity (Giddens, 1991; Gergen, 1991). Others have explored the relationship between selfhood and organisational forms describing how the current world of work demands the self to deal with uncertainty and unpredictability (Sennet, 1998).

The modernist view of the self stresses the fact that the self is facing a more complicated reality and people have to play an active role in constructing a self-identity. Giddens (1991), for example, emphasises the creative nature of the self in modern times. People in modernity are responsible for the selves they make, what he called the 'reflexive self' or something that should be constructed and created by the individual himself. As he stated 'we are not what we are, but what we make of ourselves' (p.75). Giddens (1991) recognizes diversity of risks and threats in this new scenario but he also suggests that people at the same time are provided with the social and economic resources to cope with the dilemmas and uncertainties of the modern world. Even more, he claims that the dynamism of the late modernity gives people more opportunities to exercise autonomy in their lives and sense of responsibility for their own achievements.

An opposite perspective is the one held by Sennet (1998). He maintains that the current work environment with its dynamism, unpredictability and short-termism increases fragmentation and inhibits the development of an integrated and meaningful sense of self. Current work conditions such as the lack of security and loyalty, and the reduced bonds in social relations are translated into a lack of control, sense of vulnerability and unstable, fragmented accounts of oneself (See Webb, 2004 about empirical analysis between Giddens' and Sennet's proposals).

Gergen (1991) indicates that in postmodernist times people find difficulties trying to constitute an integrative life due to what he calls 'multiphrenia'. This state is a product of the overwhelming external influence in forms of information, images, social activities, participation or what he calls a condition of 'saturation'. He asserts that the self in premodern times used to have an identifiable and stable set of characteristics which give people their identity. Nowadays, in which doubt and uncertainty are at the centre of each experience, people exist in a 'state of continuous construction and reconstruction' (Gergen, 1991, p. 7).

Baumeister (1986) addressed the same topics and presents a description of the evolution of the self along different historical periods. Unlike previous times, he

indicates that people in modernity have difficulties with self-definitions because traditional means such as religion, occupation or place do not provide a source of identity any more. It was mentioned previously that any self-definition, in order to be part of someone's identity, should provide a sense of continuity and differentiation and Baumeister (1986) argued recently that identity components have difficulties providing these criteria. He named 'destabilization' the failure in the unifying function of an identity component. Components that in the past gave continuity to life, such as place or occupation, are facing greater mobility. In the case of differentiation he called 'trivialization' the failure of the identity components to provide uniqueness. According to Baumeister (1986) trivialization is perceived in increased uniformity (being the mass consuming culture one of the causes) and the loss of legitimation due to the absence of pervasive criteria to differentiate among people, a role that, for example, religion played in the past.

Different scholars have divergent points of view regarding the impact of modernity and post-modernity on selfhood. There are also divergent opinions as to whether or not the achievement of meaningful and coherent sense of self is a condition of maturity and if it is something people have to aspire to. For some authors there is a need to develop the self as a unified entity (Erikson, 1950; McAdams, 1996) and others claim that, under the current circumstances, the self rather than being a unified entity is one of contradictory tendencies of multiple selves and the ideal of a unified synthesis is unrealistic or even more, unnecessary.

Despite the controversies expressed before there is agreement on the importance of narratives in identity configuration (Brunner, 1986; Gergen, 1991; Giddens, 1991; McAdams, 1993; 1996; Mishler, 1999; Polkinghorne, 1988; Riessman, 2002a; 2002b).

After a review of the literature, Elliot (2005) expresses that the narrative approach to identity resolves the tension between the continuity and change in identity. She quotes Ricoeur who distinguishes identity from being exactly the same and identity as permanence without sameness through time. Narrative fits in this last notion of

identity and thus through the narrative construction of identity the categorical approach which sees identity as a set of stable characteristics, gives place to a more active, evolving and dynamic view of identity.

Different authors stress the role of narratives in identity formation. Polkinghorne (1988) postulates that people achieve their personal identities through the use of the narrative configuration. He asserts that at the individual level people have narratives of their own lives that enable them to construe what they are and where they are headed. Lieblich et al. (1998) adds that stories shape and construct the narrators' personality and reality, "we know or discover ourselves and reveal ourselves to others, by the stories we tell" (Lieblich et al., 1998, p.7). Elliot (2005) expressed 'the ability to form narratives (therefore) enables an individual to organize his or her experiences in a way that provides that individual with a sense of him-or herself as an intentional agent with continuity through time' (p.126).

In the same line, other authors recognise that individuals employ narratives to develop and sustain a sense of personal unity and purpose from diverse experiences across the lifespan (McAdams, 1995; Singer, 2004). At the level of single life, autobiographical narrative gives unity to life (McAdams, 1995). Through stories the experiences and events that seem to be disconnected are seen as related parts of a whole (Polkinghorne, 1988; McAdams, 1995). Riessman (2002a, 2002b) stresses the same point when she manifests that personal stories are not merely a way of telling someone (or oneself) about one's life but they are means by which identities are fashioned.

McAdams has extensively worked on the modern self through a narrative approach (McAdams, 1993; 1995; 1996; McAdams et al., 2001). He shares with Giddens (1991) and Gergen (1991) the notion of the self as made by the person himself as his individual project, instead of something given. McAdams (1996) sees the self as developing over time and thus it needs temporal coherence. He affirms that issues of unity and purpose are critical to identity formation in the contemporary world. The person has to find a form of coherence and continuity in life.

McAdams (1995; 1996) developed an integrative framework for the study of personality that highlights the role of narrative in identity configuration. He argues that the self keeps changing, so explaining the nature of the self just naming someone's characteristics would not give account of his or her entire character.

In his framework of personality development, McAdams distinguishes between three levels in describing a person (McAdams, 1995; 1996). The first level includes personality traits and other characteristics that provide a general and comparative characterisation of the person. The second level integrates developmental, motivational and/or strategic concerns that locate the person in a specific time, place and role. It includes tasks, goals, values, projects and so on. These two levels however important for understanding people, do not give account of the human necessity of giving coherence, continuity and meaning to their lives.

McAdams (1996) stresses the need for unity and purpose in human lives as key aspects of an integrated identity, so he proposes a third level, one in which people get to know themselves in terms of an integrated self that put together past experiences, present and future projects into a meaningful pattern. It is in this level where personal identity resides. He asserts that it is through the psychological construction of life stories that modern adults create identity. Identity 'is itself an internalized and evolving life story or personal myth', identity is 'the storied self' (McAdams, 1995, p.382). People get to know who they are when they integrate roles, values and skills, and organize the past and the future into a pattern that takes the form of a story (McAdams, 1996). McAdams insists that 'modern adults give unity and purpose to the self by constructing a more or less coherent, followable and vivifying story that integrates the person into society in a productive and generative way...' (McAdams, 1996, p.306). Narrating one's life is a way of constructing one's identity (McAdams, 1995; 1996).

Following the previous conceptualization of career identity as comprised by the three levels of self (Brewer and Gardner, 1996), it seems that the narrative approach to

identity provides a more comprehensive understanding of career identity since it considers the longitudinal dimension in which different events of someone's career are connected and are made coherent and meaningful.

Polkinghorne (1988) stresses that narrative not only provides a framework for understanding the past events of one's life but also for planning future actions. Authors insist that identity means a recollection of past events, but it also has a future perspective (Polkinghorne, 1988; Bruner, 1986; Gergen, 1991). Polkinghorne (1988) states 'we are in the middle of our stories and cannot be sure how they will end; we constantly have to revise the plot as new events are added to our lives. Self then is not a static thing or a substance, but a configuring of personal events into a historical unity which includes not only what one has been but also anticipations of what one will be' (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 150). McAdams (1996) additionally insists on the character of 'openness' in life stories. An integrated identity includes a possible scenario in which the life is projected. Personal identities have a future perspective that can be known and analysed through the stories people tell about their desired and feared futures.

5.3 Possible selves or narratives of the self in future states

Previously it was stated that some self-representations can be more salient and elaborated than others and also they can refer to the positive or negative aspects of the self. In temporal terms some refer to the here-and-now experience while others depict the self in the past and future configuring the actual self and the possible self (Markus and Wurf, 1987).

Identity integrates past, present and future facts, events and meanings in life by means of stories and in doing so people give a sense of continuity to their lives. Information about the current self at work is contained in someone's career identity as well as expected future ideas of the self. Thus, the notion of continuity in identity encompasses what someone was, what currently is and what someone projects to be or do in the future. The notion of possible selves represents this projected view of the

self or self-representations in future states. Possible selves consist of individual ideas of what someone might become, would like to become and fear becoming (Markus and Nurius, 1987).

This section depicts the notion of the self in future states and its potential in understanding of motivation and career behaviour.

There is agreement in the literature about the role of the self-concept in mediating and regulating behaviour. Different authors stated that since possible selves are the cognitive manifestations of enduring goals, aspirations and self-relevant meanings, they provide an essential link between the self-concept and motivation (Markus and Nurius, 1987; Markus and Wurf, 1987; Oyserman et al., 2004; Ibarra, 2005). Markus and Wurf (1987) considered the self as 'dynamic, active, forceful and capable of change, it interprets and organizes self-relevant actions and experiences, it has motivational consequences, providing the incentives, standard, plan, rules and scripts for behaviour, and it adjusts in response to challenges from the social environment' (Markus and Wurf, 1987, p.299). The processes of self-regulation to which possible selves have influenced include goal setting, cognitive preparation for action (planning, rehearsal, strategy selection) and monitoring, judgment and self evaluation. Also, possible selves help to regulate effort and task persistence (Ruvolo and Markus, as cited in Oyserman et al., 2004).

Often possible selves include some idea about the ways to achieve these ends, so represented in the possible selves can be the plans to approach or avoid possibilities (Markus and Nurius, 1987). In their research, Oyserman et al., 2004 conclude that in order to regulate behaviour, the self-concept must contain not only goals or desired states, but also strategies about how to behave in order to reach the desired end state.

Regarding the role of possible selves in organisational contexts, authors recognise that an important aspect of a person's work identity is situated in the future (Ibarra, 1999, Fugate et al., 2004). Specifically in the career, possible selves have been considered an important energizer of career behaviour (Fugate et al., 2004) and

Ibarra argues that career transitions and change are fuelled by modifications in the person's set of possible selves (Ibarra, 2005).

As a central part of someone's career identity, the salience and degree of elaboration of possible selves are examined in this research as well as the possible selves' brought to the fore in job moves and career transitions. The salience of the possible selves refers to the extent to which an individual thinks about the possible self and how clear and easy to imagine it is (King and Raspin, 2004). The elaboration refers to the detailed, vividness and emotional depth of the possible self and the narrative richness of the self (King and Raspin, 2004).

Since possible selves comprise the cognitive representation of the desired states of the self at work, they provide personal goals and aspirations and can be seen as a motivational key in career development. This research attempts to understand if someone's possible selves have any influence on the way careers unfold and also whether desired or feared possible selves play any role in intentions of mobility and perceptions, attitudes and behaviours related to employability.

5.4 Content and forms in stories

Elliot distinguishes two functions of narratives, the descriptive one in which the teller produces a chronological account of the events, and the evaluative function whose purpose is to make clear the meaning of those events and experiences in the lives of participants (Elliot, 2005).

In order to understand narratives' meanings, stories are analysed through understanding their plots, that is, the organising theme that connects different events to make a single story (Polkinghorne, 1988). Plots can be classified and different typologies are found in the literature.

Gergen and Gergen (1988) classified plots according to their development over time and identified a typology of three narratives: a progressive narrative in which the

focus of the story is on advancement, achievement and success; a regressive narrative in which there is a course of deterioration or decline, and finally the stable narrative in which is no evidence of either progression or decline.

McAdams et al. (1993) cite the work of Hankiss who delineates four forms in self-stories: the dynastic form, in which a positive past leads to a positive present; the antithetical form, where a negative past leads to a positive present; the compensation form, in which a positive past leads to a negative present; and the self-absolutory form, in which a negative past leads to a negative present.

Also regarding the form of narratives, Mishler (1999) refers the tendency to borrow familiar tales (such as Cinderella story) to summarize and contrast peoples' ways of emplotting their lives. He argues that these labels provide rough-and-ready readings of their life stories, but they do not 'explain' them and he cautions against taking them too seriously since there is a risk of treating them as unexamined assumptions in their interpretations, rather than a topic requiring further critical analysis.

Authors agreed that although any story is unique, there exist common dimensions in which they can be compared and contrasted (Mishler, 1999; McAdams, 1996). McAdams (1993) proposed some features of life stories that can serve to make comparisons among them, such as the narrative tone of the story, its thematic lines, ideological settings, nuclear episodes, imagoes and generativity scripts.

Also, some authors refer to a 'good' story and its characteristics. Standard of maturity in a good story according to McAdams (1993; 1996) comprised characteristics as coherence, openness, credibility, differentiation, reconciliation and generative integration. Polkinghorne (1988) cited Crites who suggests that a mature self identity implies a retrospective analysis, recollection and integration of diverse events and experiences that are put together in a story in which 'the more complete the story that is formed, the more integrated the self will be' (p.106). Constructing a personal narrative can be a creative and original process, Polkinghorne (1988) quoting Nietzsche states that in an admirable life story many conflicting actions are

put together in a coherent and harmonised way where people do not adopt a typical social plot instead making their stories as a personal and creative work. Narrative enrichment occurs when one retrospectively revises, selects and orders past details in such a way as to create a self-narrative that is coherent and satisfying and that will serve as a justification for one's present condition and situation.

Even though authors stress that we are born with a narrative mind (Bruner, 1996; Polkinghorne, 1988), McAdams (1996) insists that it is in late adolescence and young adulthood that we begin to adopt a historical perspective on our own lives. Later, life transitions are closely intertwined with identity development. McAdams (1996) argues that people make meaning out of the transitions in their lives through the construction and the sharing of their stories and suggests that the stories people make and tell about the major transitions in their lives contribute to their identities, affect their perception of the future and contribute to their positioning in the social world (McAdams, 1996).

It is clear the pervasiveness of stories in life and how identity is formed and is informed by our life stories. The form stories take is based on the cultural stock of stories but also they are unique and give account of the singularities of each person. Knowing personal stories of others is a more comprehensive means to approach identity and understand how someone becomes who he or she is at some point of time. The same qualities can be applied to narrative accounts of career (Bujhold, 2004).

5.5 Narrative and career

The narrative approach to career is different from classic conceptualizations, such as developmental models (Super, 1957), individual differences models (Betz et al., 1989) or organisationally based models (for a review see Dalton, 1989). These propositions stress the development of career along predicted stages, emphasize career differences in terms of dominant motives or values or focus on the relative

influence of the individual agency versus organisational forces as determinants of careers (Bell and Staw, 1989).

Narrative approach to careers, on the other hand, allows people to understand who they are, in terms of their own meaning derived from the process of connecting a diversity of experiences through time, instead of understanding themselves in terms of categories, stages or motives.

Work is one of the main expressions of personal identity (Levinson, 1978) and careers allow the enacting of identities. As Gibson (2003) pointed out 'careers are less about positions and professions and more about the fashioning of identity over time, through enacted narrative' (Gibson, 2003, p. 178). Careers can be considered as a creative process since people are constantly dealing with decisions, unforeseen events, conflicts and so on in a quite unique way. Narrative mode not only creates but also informs identity along the career, as Cochran states 'to describe a person's career is to tell a story' (Cochran, 1990, p.71).

Narrative accounts of career provide a longitudinal perspective in which different experiences and events along the career are integrated in order to achieve a coherent self-concept in the career domain, and also they provide a future perspective in which possible states are part of the self. Possible selves are created and conveyed to others in narrative way, through them it is possible to access future expectations and strategies people use to develop their careers.

Career narratives have, as any story, a plot that informs the meaning of different events in individual's career life. Along the major themes that are pervasive in life stories and also in career narratives, are agency and communion (McAdams, 2001; Plunkett, 2001). Based on the ideas of Bakan (quoted in Marshal, 1989; Mc Adams, 2001), McAdams states that personal stories tend to revolve around themes of agency and communion and people's life stories differ with respect to the salience of both themes and those differences are measurable. In the career context themes of agency and their opposite of communion (Marshal, 1989) and serendipity (Plunket, 2001)

seem to provide a useful framework into the analysis of personal experiences of career.

Even though some specific contents are examined, the analysis is also opened to explore a variety of emerging themes.

5.6 Overview

This chapter describes the narrative approach and its contribution to the social sciences and particularly to the study of identity and careers. Previously career identity was conceptualized as an aggregate of self-representations at the three levels proposed by Brewer and Gardner (1996). The narrative mode provides a framework to understand careers in a longitudinal perspective which is lacking in Brewer and Gardner's model.

By means of career stories people retrospectively make sense of their experiences and in the process of selecting and telling they are constructing their identities at work. Through this process people also obtain a new understanding of their past experiences and are able to develop their careers further in a more informed way.

Career stories as products give account of individuals' identities and can be analysed in terms of their contents and formal aspects. Dominant themes and the ways in which plots are configured, as well as criteria of richness and coherence are among the factors used to analyse and compare people's stories. Career stories inform about the social context in which the teller is embedded and thus provide a rich account of the social construction of careers.

VI

Career Identity and Employability

The intention behind this research is to explore what the role identity plays in how careers unfold and whether it impacts on employability or not. In an attempt to deeply explore this relationship, this chapter describes theoretical formulations regarding identity development, identity crisis and career identity changes. The notion of complexity in the characterisation of career identity is introduced and its implications with respect to mobility and employability are suggested.

6.1 Identity development

Theorist agreed that a mature identity is a developmental process achieved during adolescence that can experience conflicts or crises at different points along the life cycle. Baumeister (1986) identifies identity deficit and identity conflict as two types of identity problems. Identity deficit refers to the inadequately defined self and lack of commitment to any value or goal, so behaviour seems to be inconsistent and unpredictable. In opposition, identity conflict refers to a multiple defined self whose multiple definitions are incompatible. Here commitments are strong enough that they make choices extremely complex. Both difficulties can be translated into the career domain.

Even though identity crises can be found in different periods of life, particular conflicts have been described in the adolescence and midlife. In their work of life-span development in the male population, Levinson et al., (1978) using in-depth interviews of 40 men identified cycles of stability and transition in men's lives. Individuals pursue goals, values and related activities and then the goals and activities of the period are reappraised which can generate the experience of crisis.

A key concept in adult development according to Levinson is 'Dream'. The Dream is a personal understanding of the self in the world that is projected into the future. It is composed of an array of conscious and unconscious components and is the primary source of direction and energy in the adult life course. It is in this phase, around 32 to 40 years old, when men develop a life structure in which the self acquires a prominent place, people establish in society and look for advancement in their work. The culmination of this period is the phase 'Becoming One's own man' with greater independency, status and sense of self and it is when men fulfil their Dream. Later on, middle adulthood (about 40 to 65 years old) can be a transition period and therefore a time when identity crises take place. The feeling of a gap between what the individual has accomplished in life and what he really wants is prominent. It is a period of reappraisal and disillusionment regarding the sense of self in the world and the awareness of not fulfilling the Dream can appear. Identity crises can have a more or less adaptive resolution and they can ideally finish with increased interiority, progressive individuation and integration that imply greater self-awareness, acceptance of mortality and commitment with the next generations. Career concerns can be especially relevant in this period (Levinson et al., 1978)

Undoubtedly the general stages of male life cycle are closely intertwined with their career development process and crises are also represented in the work cycle.

A mature identity has been conceptualized as an integrated and purposeful set that provides the individual with the foundations to make choices and pursue goals (Erikson, 1950; Baumeister, 1986; McAdams, 1996). The view of those who ascribe the tripartite model of Brewer and Gardner, agree that the more comprehensive the configuration of the self concept, the less likely that another person possesses an identical set of aspects, providing the person with a sense of uniqueness (Simon and Kampmeier, 2001).

This notion of multiple and elaborated self-concept has been addressed by some authors (Linville as cited in Brown, 1998; Deaux and Perkins, 2001; Hall, 1986). Linville (as cited in Brown, 1998) coined the term self-complexity to depict the

variety in which a person thinks about him or herself (those who think of themselves in many different ways are high in self-complexity). The author argues that differences in self-complexity affect people's responses to positive and negative events. It seems that the less complex the person's self-representation, the more extreme the person's response to positive and negative events in the same realm.

In the analysis of career and its transitions, issues of complexity in identity have been also addressed. Hall (1986) argues that career development is a process of identity development and a differentiated and enlarged identity allows individuals to act with greater capacities. Hall's proposal is in accordance with the notion of multidimensional and unidimensional identities proposed by Beyer and Hanna (2002). Ashforth and Johnson (2001) suggest that the complexities of individual, relational and collective identities can form a kind of 'holistic identities' (Ashforth and Johnson, 2001) which provide people with flexibility and resources to act in a more informed way.

There are some findings that relate work history to career identity complexity, a topic that will be developed later in this chapter.

6.2 Career Identity Changes

The interplay between identity and career transitions is the main focus of this research. Changes in identity have been addressed as part of the life-span development and the notion of identity crises along the life cycle have been widely described (Erickson, 1950; Baumeister, 1986; Levinson, 1978). In career contexts, identity changes are reported as results of career moves and new work experiences (Hall, 1986; Ibarra, 1999; Bridges, 2004), this theoretical and empirical background can offer some insights into the role of identity in initiating career change.

This section starts with a brief review of the general process of identity change. Thereafter, some models of identity change after work transitions are reviewed.

Scholars have long noted that identity changes accompany career moves (Hall, 1986; Ibarra, 1999; Bridges, 2004). Because new roles require new skills, behaviours, attitudes and patterns of interaction they produce fundamental changes in individuals' self-concepts. Career change has been defined as 'the period in which an individual is either changing roles (taking on a different objective role) or changing orientation to a role already held (altering a subjective state)' (Louis, 1980, p.330). In this research, career change is understood as encompassing all the experiences of mobility someone has had, it includes radical changes in terms of field, functional areas, employers, roles and jobs, or more progressive changes such as upwards movements in the same functional area and employer.

Career changes or any type of experience of mobility along the career might be periods of trial that not only induce new possibilities for the self, but at the same time, they can be a threat of the sense of self since they face people with unexpected demands in terms of adapting to a new role and reconstructing a new identity (Nicholson and West, 1989; Ibarra, 1999).

Nicholson and West (1989) and Latack (1984) describe magnitude of change as a variable differentiating amongst job transitions. Latack pointed out that transitions depending on their magnitude may incur in a potentially stressing condition with subsequent personal demands and also diversity of effects on health and career satisfaction.

The process of adjustment in career change was already described using the transition cycle proposed by Nicholson and West (1988) of preparation, encounter, adjustment and stabilization. Through these four phases the authors explain the process of personal change that people undergo as a consequence of a job change. However, this model does not make an explicit statement regarding the role of identity in that process. Some other proposals address the issue of the identity change in career transitions (Ibarra, 1999; Ashforth, 1998). They are described below.

In work contexts identity change has been defined as the ‘questioning and eventually disengaging from an identity that is central to a person’s sense of self, while at the same time exploring potential substitutes’ (Ibarra, 2005, p.5).

To explain the process of identity change, Ashforth (1998) uses a stage model derived from Lewin’s (as cited in Ashforth, 1998) classic formulation of unfreezing, change and refreezing. He states that the first stage is to *unfreeze* the current identity where people face crisis, opportunities or contrasts that induce a renewed sensemaking and a process of questioning previous assumptions. In the second stage, that he labelled *changing identity*, the major change is to move to a desired state, here people normally do an anticipatory identification that can be supported by rites or ceremonies from the organisation and then identify with a new social object. Finally, in the last stage of *refreezing* identities, the process of enacting the new identity takes place, and people start to internalize and consolidate their identity asking at the same time for social validation of the identity acquired.

Ibarra (1999) based on her research on career transitions in professional service work, developed a theoretical formulation about the role of identity in the process of adaptation into new work roles. She suggests that in this process possible selves play a crucial role. According to Ibarra (1999) people adapt to new work roles by experimenting with provisional selves that serve as trials for possible professional identities, ‘as situation demands induce people to draw from, elaborate or create new repertoires of possibilities, aspects of one’s professional identities that have been relatively stable may change markedly’ (Ibarra, 1999, p.765). Possible selves act as catalysts for identity development during the adjustment because they guide sensemaking, help people to select behaviour for trial and assist in the feedback procedure about how appropriate the selection is.

Ibarra offers a view of identity change more developed than the previous discussed. It is focused on the career context, it is derived empirically and based on the potential of possible selves in projecting the future, trying out new career options and enacting possibilities for the self that turn at the end in new identities.

In a later work, Ibarra (2005) focuses on voluntary career transitions and states some propositions, at theoretical level, related with the process of identity transformation. In this second model Ibarra stresses again the importance of possible selves since it is through the process of altering one's possible selves that people are 'pulled' to career change. She identified three ways for elaborating possible selves: activities, networks and events. People construct and reconstruct their work identities by altering what they do, with whom they engage in social interaction and how they make sense of what happens to them (Ibarra, 2005). First, Ibarra proposes that altering one's work activities is a way to change work identity. Also, participating in activities not closely tied to the normal work duties give the chance to explore new possibilities for the self creating new possible selves. Her second statement is related to the importance of shifting social networks. She points out that new contacts, social relationships or networks can alter or create possible selves through means such as identification or social validation, increasing the likelihood of career change and identity transition. The last process in altering someone's possible selves is related to the making sense of some key external events or triggers that boost sensemaking, 'unfreezing' the current status and bringing possible selves into focus.

The model proposed by Ibarra (2005) describes how behavioural and cognitive changes in the individuals' life can alter their personal identities (specifically their possible selves) that subsequently act as a facilitator of career change. Even though the model has not been tested empirically (at the time this research was conducted) it seems to be comprehensive enough, encompassing inner aspects of the individual as well as the social context, with practical implications to assist workers in need of a career change.

A more generic approach to personal transitions is the one proposed by Bridges (2004). He describes three phases in a transition cycle that can not only be applied to careers. The first one is called 'the endings' in which the person has to let go and separate from the old identity. The second phase or 'the neutral zone' is an area of

emptiness that people need to accept to finally enter into the 'moving forward' zone that requires people to begin behaving in a new way.

The notion of career identity complexity, previously introduced, has also been analysed in relation to adjustment in career change.

Beyer and Hannah (2002) state that individuals can have more or less multidimensional identities. Those with multidimensional work related personal identities carry a broad repertoire of personal characteristics, including skills, interest or abilities, within their identities. In contrast, individuals with more unidimensional identities see themselves having relatively narrow repertoires of personal characteristics. According to these authors, previous work experience plays a role in the complexity and multidimensionality of the self- concept. In their longitudinal study of newcomers' adjustment, Beyer and Hanna (2002) look at how previous experience affects adjustment through identity changes. They state that newcomers with diverse experience adjust better than those with narrow experience because diverse experience provides a 'richer store of raw materials for sensemaking, including multidimensional personal identities and more possible selves' (Beyer and Hanna, 2002, p. 637).

Beyer and Hanna's proposal, even though focused in newcomers, provides an interesting perspective for understanding the role of identity as antecedent of career change. According to their conclusions, it is possible to suggest that individuals with more multidimensional identities, and therefore, with more resources to adapt to changes, might be at the same time more keen and confident to undertake new changes. In this sense, career identity can be seen as influencing career change.

Following the same line of thought, Karaevli and Hall (2006) proposed a theoretical model that depicts the influence of career variety in managers' adaptability. They define career variety as 'the diversity in an individual's functional and institutional context experiences accumulated over time (Karaevli and Hall, 2006, p. 360). Their main proposition is that career variety develops self-awareness and thus identity

change: 'the new experience forces the person to try out new behaviours that literally bring out new facets of the self' (p.365), so managers with a high variety of work experiences develop behavioural, cognitive and emotional competences that help them to adapt to a new circumstances.

The formulations presented above stressed the fact that career identities vary in terms of their complexity and that their complexity is related to characteristics of previous work experience. What the authors proposed is that diversity and variety of work experience provide a more richer or multidimensional self-concept which subsequently facilitates the adaptation into new work roles (Beyer and Hanna, 2002; Ibarra, 1999).

6.3 Overview

Identity change can be analysed according to different perspectives. Developmental theorists argue that life stages induce identity changes mainly due to the psychological and social task the individuals have to cope with. According to Levinson et al. (1978), midlife is a period when men appraise their achievements and are confronted with their previous expectations and their current status. This self-assessment includes the realm of work and career as a central component of individuals' lives and sense of fulfilment.

There are different models that try to explain more explicitly the process of identity change along the career. Most of them address transformations in identity as a result of career changes. Transitions across jobs or among the subjective meanings of the job induce identity changes. Some authors described the process of transitions in terms of phases or cycles such as Nicholson and West's (1988) and Ashforth's (1998) models.

Later on Ibarra (2005) develops a theoretical model of identity change in voluntary career transitions in which she proposes that in order to make changes in their careers individuals have to change their identities and specifically their possible selves

through processes and activities such as involving themselves in new tasks, changing and diversifying networks and bringing possible selves into focus. Ibarra's work offers a strategy based on identity changes to facilitate career change, however, her proposal does not make an explicit statement regarding the role of career identity in career change and does not regard the processes involved.

There is empirical evidence of the relationship between the variety of past work experience and adjustment in career change (Beyer and Hanna, 2002). The notion of identity complexity seems to provide some clues to that relationship.

There are different theoretical formulations and some empirical evidence that suggest a relationship between career identity and career change not only in newcomers in organisational socialization processes but also in the adjustment in later stages of career. This evidence highlights the impact of career change on career identity. However, there is not clear enough notion regarding the role of identity as antecedent of career change. Past work experiences configure a particular career identity and it is also known that new work experiences induce identity changes. What is still missing is to understand how career identity affects future career behaviour and perception of future career options and especially the processes involved in mature workers with more stable identities.

6.4 Employability and career identity

In chapter II the conceptualization of employability and its empirical applications, however scant, were reviewed. The main conclusions point out that employability, seen as the ability to remain attractive in the labour market, is influenced by a variety of factors attributable to both individuals and wider social and economic contexts. The first approaches to the concept were focused mainly on characteristics such as physical aptitudes and general abilities. Later on, conditions of the labour market were included. Recent approaches, both theoretical and empirical, do not neglect the influence of macrosocial conditions however tend to emphasize person-centred

variables as determinants of employability. These recent models encompass wide range of capacities, traits and attitudes, sometimes in complex constellations.

This research places its interest on perceived employability or the individuals' beliefs about their value in both the internal and external labour markets and also, in personal attitudes and behavioural components of employability.

One focus of this study is to understand to what extent external and objective aspects of career such as age, tenure and mobility influence perception of personal employability. The literature reviewed tends to associate demographic factors and objective aspects of career to external measures of employability (such as the likelihood to be transferred to another position according someone else's view) and conclude that variables such as age and tenure are inversely related to employability. However, studies do not consider the impact of these variables on individuals' perceptions of employability. In this research this relationship is explored.

The understanding of the relationship between identity and career might add new elements into the comprehension of employability. Even though personal employability can be seen as multidetermined, in the light of previous information it is not possible to neglect internal factors as key aspects of the concept. This research attempts to explore the role of career identity in how careers unfold and therefore its impact on perceived employability. Moreover, the future perspective of career identity in the form of possible selves might add information in career behaviour and individuals' future prospects in the labour market.

The narrative approach to careers emphasises the integration of diverse of work experiences into a self-concept that can be described as multiple and changing. Previously it was stated that identity is composed by the characteristics of the self-concept that add continuity and differentiation to the self (Baumeister, 1986). Following this rationale, career identity also assumes continuity and differentiation in its three levels: the individual, relational and collective level of self (Brewer and Gardner, 1996).

The propositions regarding the relationship between identity and career are mainly theoretical and focused on the influence of work experience in identity change, however they do not address the role of identity in initiating career change and the mechanisms involved. What is still unknown is how characteristics of the career identity (complexity, richness or multidimensionality how it has been labelled) can affect mobility.

VII

Methodology and Research Design

In a context of a highly competitive labour market, changes in the psychological contract, the demise of lifelong job security and the emergence of new patterns of career, understanding the personal variables and processes underlying the phenomenon of mobility in careers is seen as highly relevant to assist people in achieving a successful and rewarding career.

Based on psychology-oriented theories, the concept of career identity is configured. Since identity issues are seen as implicit in life transitions, this research seeks to explore career identity and its relationship with employability.

7.1 Purpose and Approach

This study examines the evolution of identity along the career and its interaction with career changes and employability. Specifically, it explores the role of career identity in career transitions. It is focused on middle-aged middle managers working in primary and secondary industries in Concepción, Chile.

The purposes of the study are:

1. To contribute to knowledge about employability and in particular generate insight into the relationship between employability and career identity.
2. To understand how middle-aged middle-managers' perceived employability interacts with the process of constructing meaning of their career experiences and the sense of identity in the career domain.

3. To contribute to career counselling and training and development practice by identifying ways to assist mature workers in maintaining their employability.

7.2 Research Questions

The following guiding questions provided the focus and direction for the research:

Problem 1

How does middle-aged middle managers' meanings of career influence their employability?

Subproblems:

- 1.1 What are the career paths developed in middle-aged middle managers and to what extent are they closer to the 'traditional' or 'new' view of careers?
- 1.2 What are the major themes that emerge from the middle-aged middle managers' career narratives? To what extent do themes of agency and communion emerge from their career narratives?
- 1.3 To what extent are middle-aged middle-managers' career meanings related to their employability?

Problem 2

How does career identity influence personal employability?

Subproblems

- 2.1 To what extent does the concept of possible selves and identification processes give account of the career identity concept?
- 2.2 What is the relationship between possible selves and employability in the sample under study?

2.3 What is the relationship between social identification and employability in the sample under study?

7.3 Research Design and Overview

The study adopted a mixed methods approach. Much of the career research has been quantitative and survey oriented and focused mainly on objective aspects of career. Due to the nature of this research in which objective and subjective aspects of career are analysed, the mixed methods approach seems to provide flexibility in terms of perspectives, methods and tools to obtain a comprehensive understanding of a complex phenomenon.

This type of inquiry involves both collecting and analysing quantitative and qualitative data which at some point of the research are mixed; either merged, connected or embedded so that one dataset supports the other dataset (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007). There has been wide support of this strategy. Authors argue that it provides a more comprehensive evidence than each method alone and also the combination of methods tends to restrain the weaknesses of the other (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Creswell, 2005; Elliot, 2005). The quantitative approach has been criticized for its difficulties to consider the complexities and the unique character of particular cases in its attempt to describe larger groups (Elliot, 2005; Creswell, 2005). Also, quantitative inquiry, through the extensive use of cross-sectional studies, 'neglects the biographical trajectories of the individuals' (Elliot, 2005, p.119). On the other hand, the qualitative approach is considered lacking validity and difficult to generalize to other contexts.

The paradigm underlying mixed methods research is seen as 'pragmatic', in the sense that practical and problem centred approaches guide the selection of the researcher's worldviews (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007). In this method, epistemological assumptions can vary from positivism, to constructivism to participatory based on the research questions, being no paradigm that fits mixed method best. As Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) point out, pragmatism "is pluralistic and oriented towards

‘what works’ in practice” (p.23) and the potential tension resulting from multiple paradigms reflects the complexities of social reality.

The mixed methods design adopted in this study was the explanatory sequential design described by Creswell and Plano Clark (2007). It is a two-phase mixed methods design in which an initial collection and analysis of quantitative data was used to corroborate previous findings in the field, to extend the analysis and to identify and guide the purposive sampling of the participants for the in-depth qualitative study.

During first phase of the research some assumptions regarding the predictors of employability, such as age and mobility, were tested in a sample of middle-managers in Chile.

The second phase of the study applied a more inductive research strategy and used grounded theory approach as a main theoretical framework (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Grounded theory is inductively derived from the study of one phenomenon with the purpose of building theory. It uses systematic methods of collecting and analysing data to generate new theory rather than testing it. As Strauss and Corbin stated ‘it begins with an area of study and what is relevant to this area is allowed to emerge’ (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p.23). Unlike content analysis, in grounded theory, the concepts, categories and themes are identified and developed while the research is conducted.

After a review of relevant literature, the main criteria for the sampling process were identified. Gender, roles and sectors provided the framework for the theoretical sampling process. Thereafter, by means of a questionnaire survey, different data were collected including measures of personal employability and social identification from an enlarged sample of the population that forms the focus of the research investigation. This allowed initial mapping of the experiences of this population and exploration of the extent to which they matched or contrasted with previous knowledge in the field.

Later on, an in-depth study of a purposive sample of the respondents to the questionnaire study was undertaken. A purposeful sample provides 'a clear criterion or rational for the selection of participants, or places to observe, or events that relate to the research questions' (Ezzy, 2002, p. 74). Since the objective of this research is focused on middle aged workers, the purposive sampling addressed the group aged 39 to 50 years.

Even though the process of sampling was 'theory-driven' (Miles and Huberman, 1994) it was also progressive in the sense that it could continually be refined along the data collection process. In the study, the sample looked for maximum variation in order to inform about similarities and patterns in the phenomenon of study.

Using a narrative approach, individuals' career stories were collected. Studying and interpreting self-narratives allowed searching for a deeper understanding of the participants' life experiences of career. Also storytelling is considered a way in which individuals construct and inform their identities (Polkinghorne, 1988; McAdams, 1996; Brunner, 1986; Mishler, 1999). Attending considerations from Riessman (2002b) and Mishler (1999), the interviews tried to induce an open and free expression of the participants, treating the interviews as dialogues.

One of the main distinctive characteristics of grounded theory approach is that data collection and data analysis are interrelated. Grounded theorists suggest initiating the analysis as soon as the first group of data is collected (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). In the current research, interviews were transcribed as early as possible and immediately afterwards the process of coding begun. The first data collected was used to revise the initial research questions and to guide both the formulation of concepts and categories for the thematic analysis.

After a pilot study, the fieldwork and the process of interviewing were developed in three different periods. This strategy together with the concurrent data analysis

allowed the refinement of the interview and the identification of the saturation point (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

To reach some understanding of the complex notion of identity requires a form of case-centred approach and to use a comparative framework which allows the recognition of similarities between individuals and the range of sources of variation in how identities are constructed.

A general overview of the procedures is presented in figure 1.

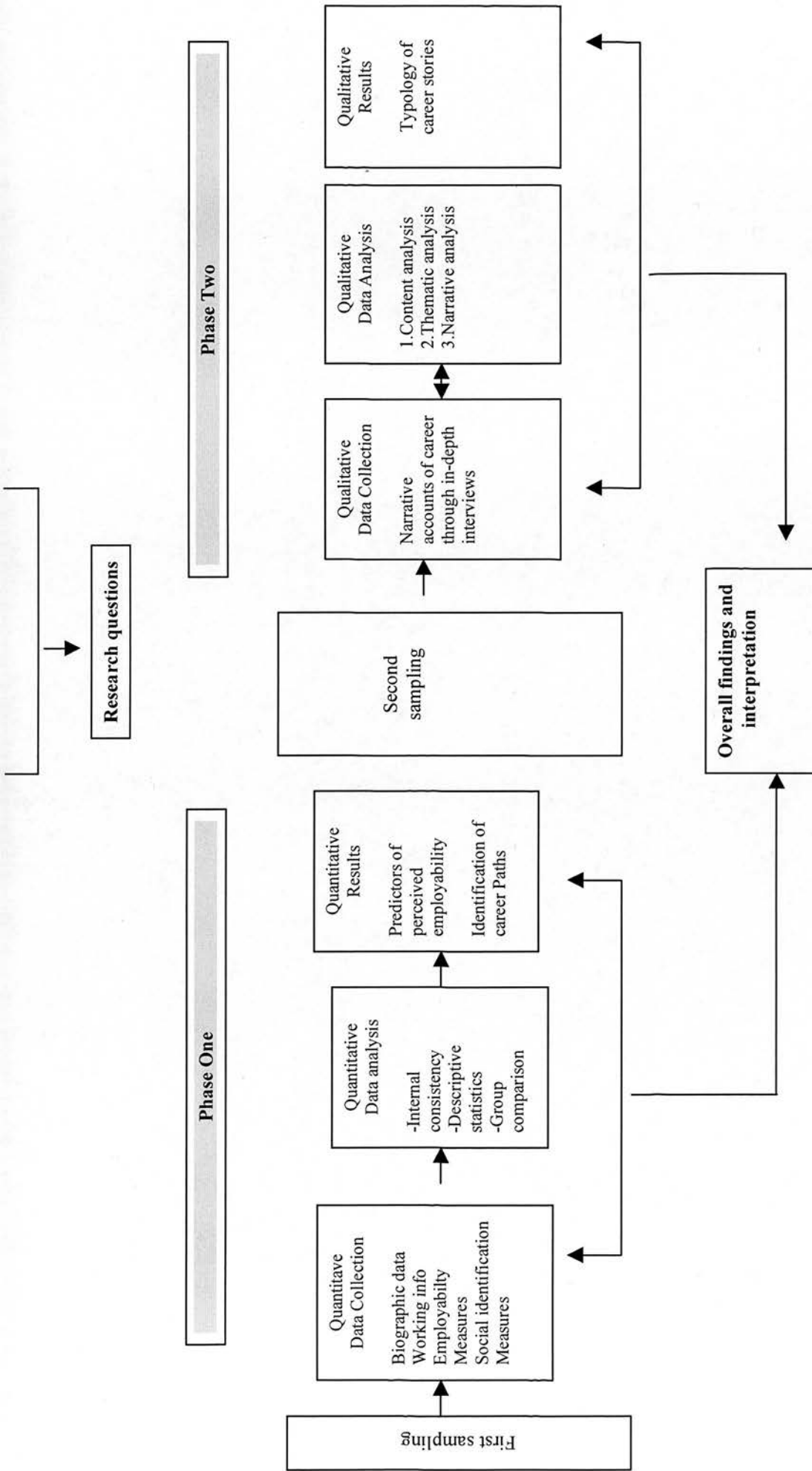


Figure 1. Stages in the research design

7.4 Study Population

In the first stage of the study the sample comprised 85 men, of different ages, working in middle managerial positions with full-time contracts, in companies from primary and secondary sectors from the VIII region. Thereafter, further purposive sampling was used to identify participants in middle age, from different functional areas who represent the three sectors of the industry involved in the study.

The middle age proposed in this study range from 39 to 50 years old. Chilean statistics of the labour force considers the middle-aged group those aged between these years and this range of age allows the differentiation of middle-aged workers from prime age workers (25 to 39 years) and older workers (more than 50). Prime age workers are those who occupies the majority of jobs in the labour market and are not considered as vulnerable as younger workers (those aged from 19-25 years old, in which the unemployment tend to be more common, Mideplan, 2004) and older workers (older than 50 years old, who have less chance to be reemployed in case of being fired, OECD, 2005b).

All the subjects were in managerial roles. Managerial positions are understood as those with a degree of responsibility for human, physical and financial resources, who are neither executive nor front line workers.

It is important to note that the population studied took part of the Chilean primary labour market. They are skilled workers whose mobility is mainly voluntary. Even though this group is in a better position compared to those from the secondary labour market, the current social, economic and organisational context faces them with new challenges in terms of employability. As it was mentioned earlier, flexibility, continued learning and mobility might be especially demanding for some groups in this segment, a population that is not traditionally addressed in the employability agenda.

As mentioned, the initial sample comprised of 85 respondents, all of them working as middle managers in the region VIII, mainly in the city of Concepción. One hundred and forty two questionnaires were distributed and the rate of return was 61 percent.

Participant's ages ranged from 30 to 62 years old with an average age of 41.3 (SD= 7.9). Regarding education, 100 percent have completed secondary education, 62 percent have graduate degrees and 3 percent have postgraduate degrees.

Participants were contacted through their companies, universities and those attending training courses. In all cases, the objectives of the study were presented and there was an agreement of confidentiality and the use of the information for academic purposes only.

The sample from the participating firms was chosen in agreement with the main contact at the company who in most of the cases was a human resources representative. Role title, salary levels and status (number of levels that there are between the worker and the top person in the local company) were considered as decision criteria.

There were 23 companies involved in the study from three sectors of industry: Manufacturing, Fishing and Forestry. They were chosen due to their relevance as economic activities in the region VIII and also due to theoretical reasons. As it was stated before, the primary and secondary industries are experiencing a decrease in relevance in the world economies, especially in those more developed. The same trend has been observed in Chile, where reduction in the employment in those sectors has increased in favour of the service sector. This trend is expected to continue in the short and medium term (Meller, 2005). The sectors and their main characteristics are described in Annexe I.

The share of participants by industry was 44 percent from manufacturing, 12 percent fisheries and 42 percent forestry. It was not possible to assure an equivalent number of participants from each sector.

Regarding companies, 23 firms participated in the study and the criteria used to select them were their respective industries and size. They were all medium and large companies from the manufacture, fishing and forestry sectors.

Beyond the mentioned criteria, the sites were chosen due to practical reasons, the entry was possible, there was a high probability of a rich mix of people and processes of interest were presented and the likelihood of the researcher being able to build trusting relations with the participants in the study.

In the second phase of the study, through a purposive sampling procedure, 25 participants from the previous phase were selected to be interviewed. This second sample was formed by participants between 39 to 50 years of age, trying to encompass different functional areas representing the three sectors of the industry involved in the study.

7.5 Data Collection

Data was collected using a mixed-method approach with a combination of questionnaire and in-depth interviews.

7.5.1 Questionnaire

A questionnaire was developed to provide information regarding demographical data: age and educational level; work information: work history, job mobility, current position, company, sector, organisational tenure, job tenure, degree of specialization and employability measures and social identification measures.

Mobility refers to the number and types of movements someone has had along his career. The movements considered are changes in jobs, roles, functional areas, employers, sector, fields, among others. Career change and career transition are considered equivalents and types of mobility.

Tenure informs about the length of time someone has been either in a job referred here as job tenure, or in one specific company named organisational tenure.

According to individuals' mobility and tenure measures, five career paths were identified.

Specialist refers to those workers who pursue a specific line of work as opposed to the group of generalist whose knowledge, aptitudes, and skills are applied to a variety of different fields.

Employability is understood here as someone's ability to maintain an employment or gain another employment if required. Perceived internal employability refers to the individuals' perception of their attractiveness in the internal labour market or within the company they are currently working for. Perceived external employability informs about the extent to which someone perceives himself as attractive in the external labour market. Both constructs are addressed here by quantitative measures. The scales used were Perceived Internal Employability and Perceived External Employability Scales, adapted and translated into Spanish from Johnson (as cited in Eby et al., 2003, Alpha 0.74). They were comprised of six items each, typical items are: *'Given my skills and experience, the company that I work for views me as a value-added resource'*, *'There are many jobs available for me given my skills and experience'*. The answers were rated on a five-point Likert-type scale, ranging from strongly disagrees to strongly agree (see annexe II).

A second measure of employability consists of the scales of Employability Orientation and Employability Activities developed by Van Dam (2004). Employability orientation refers to the 'attitudes of employees toward interventions aimed at increasing the organisation's flexibility through developing and maintaining worker's employability for the organisation' (Van Dam, 2004, p. 30). It was measured by seven items (e.g. *'If the organisation needs me to perform different tasks, I am prepared to change my work activities'*). Employability activities scale

refers to the extent to which the person is actively involved in activities to improve their employability. It consists of six items (e.g. *'In the past year, I have been actively looking for possibilities to change my working situation'*).

A third measure of perceived employability was used which considers the labour market position workers expect to have five years ahead (Sanders and De Grip, 2004). It consists of one question: *If you look five years ahead, what will your position on the labour market be?* It has eight answer's options (see annexe II).

The instrument employed also considered measures of social identification. Three measures of social identification were included: Organisational Identification (Mael and Ashforth, 1992), Professional Identification (adapted from Mael and Ashforth, 1992) and Need of organisational identification, nOID (Kreiner and Ashforth, 2004)

Organisational identification refers to the extent to which a member defines him or herself by the same attributes that he or she believes define the organization. It was measured using the Mael and Ashforth's scale ($\alpha = 0.87$, Mael and Ashforth, 1992 and $\alpha = .90$, Kreiner and Ashforth, 2004), comprised by six items answered in a five-point Likert-type scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. A typical item is *'This organisation's successes are my successes'*.

Professional identification is defined as the extent to which an organisational member defines him or herself by the same attributes that he or she believes define the profession they belong to. It was measured using an adaptation of the organisational identification scale from the Mael and Ashforth's scale (1992). It consists of six items answered in a five-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agreed'. A typical item is: *'When someone criticizes my profession, I feel like a personal insult'*.

Need of organisational identification refers to the individual's generalized desire to derive at least partial self-definition from a work organization of which he or she is a member (Glynn, 1998). It was operationalized using a scale created by Kreiner and

Ashforth ($\alpha = 0.75$, 2004) consisting of seven items answered in a five-point Likert-type scale. A typical item is: *'Without an organisation to work for, I would feel incomplete'*.

After the authorization of the authors, all the scales were adapted and translated into Spanish and tested in the pilot study. See annexes III and IV for the complete Spanish and English versions of the questionnaire. The survey was sent to the respondents by e-mail and the completed questionnaire sent back to the researcher's e-mail address or in a hard copy.

7.5.2 Narratives

Narratives were obtained through in-depth interviews conducted with a sample of 25 participants selected from the previous survey. The interviews were basically open with some guiding questions, trying to obtain free and rich self-narratives as well as getting information of episodes or segments encompassing an individual's career. The main episodes covered by the interview were: first work experiences, decisions to make transitions, turning points and/or key events in the career, the projected future, and reflection on personal identity among others (see appendix V).

Interviews lasted from 90 minutes to four hours in one or two sessions. Subject to the agreement of the participant, all interviews were recorded on audio cassette. One interviewee refused to be recorded. Afterwards, tapes were fully transcribed onto paper.

7.6 Data Analysis

To answer the research questions the following methods of analysis were undertaken

7.6.1 Quantitative Analysis

Electronic data processing using SPSS allowed the analysis of the variables: Demographical data (age and schooling); working experience and labour history (jobs, functions, employers, tenure, etc.); measures of employability and social identification.

The quantitative analysis includes descriptive statistics analysis, correlation and partial correlation analysis and statistical techniques to compare groups. Thereafter, patterns of mobility were identified and further relationships were explored.

7.6.2 Qualitative Analysis

The basic scheme of qualitative analysis in this research follows the proposal of Miles and Huberman (1994). It starts with coding words, phrases or sentences. Codes are labels or 'units of meanings' (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 56), some were listed prior to the analysis as in the content analysis and others were inductively derived from the data collected when using thematic analysis. Thereafter, codes were grouped to form more abstract categories in the pattern coding or second-level coding. Miles and Huberman (1994) stated that usually pattern codes revolve around summarizers such as themes, explanations, relationships and more theoretical constructs. Later on, more complex relationships among the codes were developed in order to build a systematic account of what has been observed and recorded.

The analysis of stories can be approached according to the unit of analysis selected or the level of analysis used. They are connected and not exclusive, and they were all applied in this research. A brief explanation follows.

About locating the segments for analysis the options vary from the entire story (either a life story or in this case, career story), large sections of talk and extended accounts of lives, or brief and specific sections or episodes of stories. Riessman

(2002a) indicates that deciding which segment analyse is an interpretive decision and should be made according theoretical interests. Also, they are influenced by disciplinary preferences and research questions. In this research some specific segments of the talk were analysed such as the accounts of the self-concept, high, low and turning points and possible future selves. Later on, the whole story was addressed since the extended accounts of the career are the main focus to understand how identity evolves along the entire working experience.

According to the type of analysis, the examination of the stories included three different levels with different characteristics that also address different segments of the discourse. They are content analysis, thematic analysis and narrative analysis.

Content analysis is aimed at knowing the extent to which specific content related to the theory was present in a defined unit of analysis in the text. In contrast to the other two levels, content analysis begins with predefined categories derived from existing theories that are searched into the text; in this sense is the most deductive form of qualitative analysis (Ezzy, 2002).

The categories applied in the content analysis included agency themes with subcategories of self-mastery, status-victory, achievement-responsibility and empowerment (McAdams, 2001; Marshal, 1989); themes of communion (McAdams, 2001; Marshal, 1989) and serendipity (Plunkett, 2001). They were chosen due to their relevance for career identity and career behaviour. These themes have been a main focus in life stories (McAdams, 1996) and career development (Marshal, 1989) and they are a useful mean to approach variability across stories and to help to make comparisons among participants.

A description of the categories of the content analysis is presented below.

Themes of agency include concepts of strength, power, expansion, mastery, control, dominance, autonomy and independence all of which have relevance in career analysis and it could be assumed some connection with employability.

McAdams describes four themes of agency (McAdams, 2001). Self-mastery corresponds to the effort of the protagonist to master or perfect the self. The protagonist attains a dramatic insight into the meaning of his or her life; or the protagonist experiences a greatly enhanced sense of control over his destiny in the wake of an important event. In the status-victory category the protagonist attains a heightened status or prestige amongst his or her peers. In the achievement-responsibility category the protagonist of the story feels proud, confident or successful in meeting significant challenges or overcoming important obstacles or taking on major responsibilities for other people. In the empowerment code the subject is enlarged, empowered or made better through his or her association with someone or something larger and more powerful than the self. The empowering force is usually a highly influential teacher, mentor or authority figure who provides critical assistance or guidance for the individual.

A second category of analysis is communion. It is described as acceptance of the environment instead of search of control as the case of agency. Communion orientation means integration with others, search for commitment regardless of retribution and, in opposition to agency, it is concerned with personal rhythm rather than goal oriented behaviour (Marshall, 1989).

As opposed to agency Plunkett (2001) used the notion of serendipity. Serendipity describes a 'subjective, conscious, and affectively varied characterization of one's experience as being driven by chance or accident, with goals and means not fully, consciously articulated or owned by the individual' (Plunkett, 2001, p. 154). Serendipity is characterized by the absence of a preconceived intent, goal or strategy to achieve a predetermined result. Content of agency, communion and serendipity are analysed in participants' narratives.

Content analysis tends to be used in conjunction with other forms of data analysis that are more inductive and sensitive to emergent categories and interpretations (Ezzy, 2002) as the case of thematic analysis. In the thematic analysis the categories

into which themes are sorted are not decided on prior the data coding and in this since it is more inductive than content analysis.

In the current research and according to thematic analysis, some themes were identified in the data. As it was mentioned the process of coding helps the data reduction, also allowing the possibility of finding common thematic elements across narratives, exploring key variables and making comparison across participants (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

The thematic analysis is mainly applied in a categorical approach to either the segments of short talks or some specific episodes in the career story. In the current research, some episodes or particular accounts of the whole career story were extracted and analysed as in the case of possible selves, high points, low points and turning points in the career story.

In the analysis of possible selves participants were asked to describe their possible future desired and feared selves. The answers were analyzed in terms of their degree of elaboration and salience. The salience of the possible selves refers to the extent to which the individual thinks about the possible self and how clear and easy it is to imagine. Essentially salience refers to the extent to which the possible self is an active part and plays a substantial role in the person's mental life (King and Raspin, 2004). The elaboration of possible selves refers to the detail, vividness and emotional depth of the possible self and also to the narrative richness of the self (King and Raspin, 2004).

Turning points are a useful way to see how identities shift over time. Riessman (2002b) sees them as moments when the narrator refers to a radical shift in the course of life, meanings of past experiences change and so do individual's identity. McAdams et al. (2001) consider turning points as periods of change, as 'turns in the road, change in the direction or the trajectory of our lives' (McAdams et al., 2001). These moments of transitions are central in the construction of meaning of life and they contribute to the development of identities. Life transitions are considered

periods of heightened self-reflection and opportunities for development (Bauer and McAdams, 2004) in which people use a variety of strategies to make sense of perceived transitions in life.

High points are described by McAdams (1995b) as moments or episodes in the life story in which the person experiences extremely positive emotions like joy, excitement or great inner peace. On the other hand, the low point or a nadir is an experience in which people feel extremely negative emotions like despair, disillusionment or guilt. McAdams (2001) stressed that people need to make sense of these episodes and in doing so they used different strategies.

In this study thematic analysis was applied to personal accounts of the possible selves and the relevant points along the career story. This approach was useful for understanding the future projections in career life, the relationship with agency and other key variables and also the influence of possible selves in the attitudes to career mobility. In the case of high, low and turning points they provided a rich description of the meaning making of objective and subjective career transitions and also of the social context, driving forces in career and cultural values at work.

The more integrative approach is the one from narrative analysis, which addresses the whole person's account. The complete career story is analysed in an attempt to understand it while trying to preserve its integrity. In contrast to thematic analysis, the emphasis is on whole person and whole narrative (Ezzy, 2002). As it was mentioned before, parts of the story become significant only as they are placed within the context of the whole narrative.

In this holistic type of analysis the strategy applied in this research was categorizing narratives using a typology of plot, the plot can be broadly defined as the organizing theme that identifies the significance of different events, the plot or story line is the means by which different events are related to each other composing a whole (Polkinghorne, 1988). As Elliot (2005) suggests they are helpful since they allow one to see patterns and similarities across the interviews that might otherwise have

all appeared to be just a collection of individual stories. In the current research plots were identified considering different variables into the career identity concept. The categories that emerged from the stories help to make comparison among the participants and also to typify the stories.

Another strategy described in the analysis of complete stories focuses on the direction of the plot over time whether it is progressive, regressive or follows a steady line (Gergen and Gergen, 1988). In a progressive narrative the focus of the story is on advancement, achievement and success, in a regressive narrative there is a course of deterioration or decline, while in the stable narrative there is no evidence of either progression or decline. This strategy was also attempted in the current analysis. In some cases the direction of the plot was easily recognized and it was helpful to make comparisons among different stages within a single career story.

For the qualitative analysis the software of qualitative data analysis NVivo version 2 (2002) was employed.

7.7 Pilot Study

A small-scale replica of the overall study was developed aimed at testing the research methods and research instruments and their suitability, getting information about how diverse or homogeneous the survey population was and testing the response of the subjects to the methods of data collection. The pilot study was also expected to provide information about administrative and logistics conditions that might influence the conduction of the survey and the interviews.

The pilot study included:

- 7.7.1 Company-level data gathering to provide evidence for setting up the population under study
- 7.7.2 Sampling. A theoretical sampling was developed according to the criteria of gender, role and sectors.

- 7.7.3 Individual-level data gathering: The survey was undertaken, using the 'Cuestionario de Empleabilidad'.
- 7.7.4 Quantitative Data Analysis
- 7.7.5 Sampling: A purposive process of sampling was developed according to criteria of age, sectors and functional roles.
- 7.7.6 Interviewing: Three in-depth interviews were conducted.
- 7.7.7 Data Analysis: Content, thematic and narratives analysis were developed.
- 7.7.8 Refinement of Research Design, methods of data collection and data analysis

Fifteen people participated in the questionnaire and four of them were interviewed in two or more sessions. Since participants of the pilot study provided extensive information, their antecedents were included in the main study.

After the pilot study the questionnaire was modified in order to make it easier to understand, allowing its self-administration. It provides useful information about the degree of responsiveness of companies and individuals.

7.8 Rigour and Ethics in Quantitative and Qualitative inquiries

Classic criteria of rigour in quantitative research emphasised aspects of validity, reliability and objectivity as central methodological issues. Validity refers to whether a scientific theory is internally coherent and whether it accurately reflects the external world. Reliability refers to the consistency among the results of the same research. Objectivity points out the need of control of personal biases and interests of the researcher.

Standards of quality in a quantitative approach were addressed in the current investigation. Some statistical analysis was undertaken in order to satisfy criteria of reliability and validity, however the scales used already have proved to achieve this standards.

Ezzy (2002) mentions the difficulties applying these criteria to a qualitative research as for example the case of replication of some studies. Also, he states that trying to be objective and pretend not to influence the research with personal biases is considered not possible so instead researchers need to be aware of and acknowledge their preconceptions and the inner political condition of any research. In accordance, Riessman (2002b) argues that 'any methodological standpoint is by definition, partial, incomplete and historically contingent' and researchers need to consider them as one particular representation of the reality, suitable for some situations.

Quoting Gubrium and Holstein and their book *The New Language of Qualitative Method*, Ezzy (2002) mentioned some criteria of interpretive rigour in qualitative research. Among the factors he referred to scepticism of the common sense, close scrutiny of the reality studied, thick description of the social life, focus on the process, appreciation of the subjectivity and tolerance for complexities of the social life.

In the current research ethical issues were addressed. Confidentiality and the proper use of information were clearly stated and an agreement of reciprocity was established. The general results of the study will be available for the participants. For the companies some particular information from the quantitative survey could be supplied upon request, in both cases identifying information will be suppressed.

Participants were asked to agree with an informed consent (See annexe VI) that stated the purpose of the study, the population addressed, the person leading and responsible for the research and the context in which it took place. It was also made a clear statement about the confidentiality in the use of the information and its utilization for academic purposes. Participants were asked their authorization to publish the results in scientific journals in English and Spanish safeguarding the anonymity of the participants, companies or persons. It was guaranteed that the information collected would be used only for the aims stated and the tape recorded would be destroyed once finished their utilization.

The following chapters present the analytic process and the main findings derived from the data collected. Chapter VIII describes the quantitative analysis and results in both the main sample and the sample of interviewees.

Chapters IX and X present the results of the qualitative analysis from the in-depth interviews in the second sample. Chapter IX includes a general description of the group of interviewees, their patterns of mobility and reasons for job changes. Thereafter, a first analysis and findings from the content and thematic analysis of the narratives accounts of career is developed and the main themes in career stories are identified.

Chapter X refers to career identity concept and it addresses both the self-definition in the career context as well as the role of social identification in the configuration of identity. Thereafter, the analysis of the main features of identity at different points of career (beginnings, transitions and future) allow understanding how career identities are forged.

Later on, career identity is explored in a case-centred analysis of individuals' career stories as a whole. This analysis involves the understanding of the evolution of themes along the career and also the analysis of the story forms of participants' career accounts. The last stage attempts to integrate and synthesize the findings from the previous analysis. A typology of career stories was proposed to illustrate the commonalities in stories and the identities associated.

Chapter VIII

Quantitative Analysis and Results

The first phase of the study aims to obtain a profile of the population studied in terms of mobility, career patterns, measures of employability and social identification, in order to know the extent to which previous theoretical proposals and empirical findings on careers and employability are applicable to the specific population and the particular context analysed here. It employs quantitative data collection and analysis of a questionnaire survey conducted in a male population of middle-aged middle managers working in three sectors in the region VIII, in Chile.

The main results are presented below. They contain a descriptive analysis of the individuals' biographic and work information, including the number of jobs held and tenure measures. Thereafter, as a means to organise career mobility information, some career patterns are identified.

Findings from perceived employability measures, expected labour market position and attitudes and activities regarding employability are presented together with a preliminary discussion of the relationship with other variables involved.

The analysis of social identification in work contexts is also presented. Specific measures of organisational and professional identification together with the need of organisational identification measure are described and their relationship with key variables is explored.

8.1 General description of the sample

8.1.1 Demographic data and work information

The population participating in this stage comprised 85 middle managers, from different age groups, regular full time employees of companies from Fishing, Forestry and Manufacturing sectors.

Ages ranged from 30 to 62 years old with an average of 41.3 (SD= 7. 6). There are some differences in age according to sectors. Manufacturing and fishing sectors present the highest share of population older than 40 years (55 percent and 50 percent respectively). The highest share of young population is in the forestry sector with 73 percent aged 40 years or less.

Regarding education, 100 percent had completed secondary education, 62 percent are graduates and 3 percent are postgraduates. According to degree of specialization in their occupations, 67 percent are considered generalist and 33 percent specialist.

The distribution of participants per sector and companies is presented in the table 1.

Twenty-three companies participated in the study each of them with different degree of representation in the sample. From the fishing sector, one company (Fishery I) represents the 83 percent of the sector. Manufacturing is mainly represented by a textile company which accounts for the 32 percent of the sector. In the forestry sector there are three main companies equally represented

Table 1
Frequency of participants per sector and companies

		Frequency	Percentage (N=85)
Valid	Fishing	12	14
	Fishery I	10	12
	Manufacturing	47	44
	Textile	15	18
	Forestry	36	42
	Forestry I	11	13
	Forestry II	10	12
	Forestry III	10	12

8.1.2 Job Mobility

In reference to job mobility, the number of jobs participants have held during their work life ranges from 1 to 6, with an average of 3.7 (SD=1.1). Tenure information shows a mean of 10.9 years (SD=8.6) for organisational tenure and 6.2 years (SD=5.9) for tenure in the last job (See table 2). There are differences among sectors in terms of organisational and job tenure. Workers from the fishing industry show the highest score in job tenure (8.4 years, SD= 5.6) and the forestry industry shows the lowest levels in organisational tenure (7.7 years, SD= 4.6) and job tenure (4.5 years SD=4.2). Table 3 presents different measures of job mobility by sector.

The variable Index of Stability was constructed to represent the average amount of time per job in relation to the total years of work experience. This measure shows that 5.7 years (SD=4.7) are the average number of years per job in the group surveyed. However, there is high variability among sectors. The highest index of stability is found in the fishing industry with an average of 7 years (SD=5) of job amongst its workers and the lowest score is found in the forestry sector with 4.7 years (SD=3.0). This data indicate that workers in the fishing sector show in average higher stability compared to workers from the other two sectors studied and forestry has workers that show, in average, the lowest level of stability.

Table 2
Work Information total sample (N=85)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	M	S D
Age	85	30	62	41.3	7.6
Number of jobs	85	1	6	3.7	1.1
Organisational Tenure	83	.2	41	10.9	8.6
Job Tenure	82	.2	28	6.2	5.9
Stability Index	80	1	30	5.7	4.7
Valid N (listwise)					

Regarding companies there are also differences in terms of tenure and average number of years per position (stability index) among their workers. Participants from the textile company (n=15) show an organisational tenure of 18 years (SD=9.8) and an average of 7.6 years per job held (SD=6.8). The main fishery in the fishing sector also presents high organisational tenure and an average of 7.5 years per position (SD=4.9) among its workers.

In the lower rank, there is one forestry company (n=11) whose workers show an average of 3 (SD=1.1) years per position.

Table 3 indicates data of tenure and stability by company.

Table 3
Tenure and stability index by sector and company

		Organisational tenure	Stability Index
Valid	Fishing	10.1	7
	Fishery I	10.6	7.5
	Manufacturing	13	5.9
	Textile	18	7.6
	Forestry	7.7	4.7
	Forestry I	7.3	3
	Forestry II	8.8	7.7

The findings described suggest that workers from companies in the same sector show variability in terms of mobility. Although previous levels of mobility in workers of one particular company do not necessarily relate to the characteristics of the

company, it could be assumed that some characteristics of the firm someone is working for might influence future mobility.

8.2 Career Paths

Based on information of tenure and changes in employer, status and function, and the average of years per position held, five career paths are identified. They are described below and the frequency of each career path in the population surveyed is presented in Table 4.

- I. Single employer-multiple functions
- II. Multiple employers-multiple functions-tenure six or less years
- III. Multiple employers-one work line
- IV. Multiple employers-multiple functions-job tenure more than six years
- V. Single employer-One work line

I. Single employer-multiple functions

Workers in this group have developed their entire work experience in one company, performing in different functional areas. Their moves have been mainly upward. From the total population surveyed, 25 percent belong to this category. In the analysis of the average number of years per position, workers with this career path show a mean of 6.4 years ($SD=4.5$).

II. Multiple employers-multiple functions-work tenure six or less years

The second path is characterised by a career in a variety of functional areas, with multiple companies, and an average of five years or less per job. They represent 29 percent of the total population surveyed. Workers in this type of path show an average number of years per position of 3.7 years ($SD=2.6$).

III. Multiple employers-one work line

This group is comprised by workers who have performed in the same type of job but in different organisations. This path is typical of specialized professionals. The group is comprised by 13 percent of the total sample and the number of years per position held by workers in this path is 5.9 years (SD=5.6).

IV. Multiple employers-multiple functions- tenure more than six years

This career path is characterized by a sequence of positions of variety of employers, in different work lines with an average of more than six years in the current position. Twenty eight percent of the respondents belong to this category. The average amount of time in each position held is 5.6 years (SD=2.4).

V. Single employer-One work line

This group has developed their work experience in one organisation in the same functional area. Although they can have experienced changes in status, they can be considered as the group with less mobility. Five percent of the participants show this career path. The average number of years per position is 14.9 years (SD=10.3).

Career paths I and V show the highest stability index. This might be indicative that workers with one employer, either in the same or different functions, tend to be less mobile than those who have worked for multiple employers. It could be stated that options of mobility increase when changing employers.

Career path II, the one with highest mobility, is mainly comprised by workers from the forestry sector. Forestry has also workers with the lowest number of years per job and the highest share of young workers.

Table 4
Frequency and stability index by career path (N=85)

		Career Path	Frequency	Percentage	Stability Index	SD
Valid	I	One employer- multiple Functions	21	25	6.4	5
	II	Multiple employer- multiple functions Lower tenure	25	29	3.7	2.6
	III	Multiple employer One work line	11	13	5.9	5.6
	IV	Multiple employer Multiple functions Higher tenure	24	28	5.6	2.4
	V	One employer One work line	4	5	14.9	10.3
		Total	85	100		
Total			85	100		

When career paths are analysed in terms of companies, the results indicate two extreme cases. The textile company, whose workers exhibit the highest degree of stability, also shows that the majority of its workers (53 percent) have a career path type IV. On the other hand, forestry company I is conformed by workers with the lowest index of stability, mainly with a career path II (55 percent), significantly more than the share of this path in the general sample.

Information of mobility in the population surveyed provides the first input to understand the relationship between career change and perceived employability. The results from the measures of employability are presented below, followed by the relationship of these measures according to sectors, companies and career paths.

8.3 Employability Measures

Two different sets of measures of employability were undertaken: Perceived internal and external employability (Johnson, in Eby et al., 2003) and Employability orientation and activities (Van Dam, 2004).

An open question regarding the expected labour market position (Sanders and de Grip, 2004) was also formulated as an extra measure of perceived employability.

8.3.1 Perceived Internal and External Employability

Both scales, perceived internal and external employability are comprised of six items rated on a five-point Likert-type scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Perceived internal employability refers to the perception of the personal value in the internal labour market. The scale has an internal consistency of Cronbach alpha coefficient reported of 0.73. In the current study the Cronbach alpha coefficient was 0.87.

Perceived external employability scale refers to the perceived value in the external labour market. Eby et al. (2003) showed a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.74. In the current research, alpha coefficient was 0.80.

Perceived internal employability and perceived external employability are conceptually different measures but closely related ($r=0.36, p<0.01$).

In the total sample, perceived internal employability shows a mean of 4.0 in a five point Likert-type scale ($SD=0.76$). Perceived external employability has a mean of 3.4 ($SD=0.84$) in the same type of scale. In general, participants perceived themselves as more attractive in the internal labour market than in the external labour market. There are no significant differences among the three sectors surveyed in these measures.

Correlation analysis shows a significant and inverse relation between age and perception of internal ($r= -0.09, p<0.01$) and external employability ($r= -0.46, p<0.01$). Mature workers perceive fewer opportunities to be employed in another company and lower chances to be transferred to another position within the firm compared to workers in prime age (25 to 39 years).

Regarding perception of employability and tenure measures, a negative and significant relationship exists between perceived employability and organisational and job tenures. The longer the time in same position and organisation, the lower the perception of being employable in the internal and external labour markets (See table 5).

The correlation analysis of the variables perceived internal and external employability and number of jobs shows no significant relationship. However, when the number of years of work experience is combined with the number of jobs in the stability index (the higher the ratio, the higher the stability) a significant and negative relationship is found between this indicator and perceived external employability ($r = -0.48$, $p < 0.01$). Workers who have held more positions in their work life see themselves as more attractive in the external labour market and are more confident about their chances to be reemployed if necessary, than those who have been less mobile.

These findings confirm that perceived employability is influenced by job mobility and this relationship is stronger in the case of perceived external employability.

When measures of employability are associated to sectors, there are no significant differences among the three sectors studied. However, an independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the perceived internal and external employability in the company with more mobile workers (forestry II) and the one with workers with more stable careers (textile). There are significant differences in the scores of perceived internal employability for Forestry II ($M=4.4$, $SD=0.64$) and the textile company ($M= 3.6$, $SD=0.9$; $t(24)= -2.3$, $p=0.03$); and also, there are significant differences in perceived external employability measures for Forestry II company ($M= 3.7$, $SD=0.8$) and the textile company ($M=2.9$, $SD=0.94$; $t(24)= -2.3$, $p=0.03$).

Comparison of mean between career path I and II (the lowest and highest mobility respectively) regarding employability measures using t-test, indicates that there are

significant differences between career path I ($M=3.3$, $SD=0.9$) and career path II ($M= 3.8$, $SD= 0.7$; $t(44)=-1.98$, $p=0.05$) in perceived external employability.

Since career paths inform about tenure and average number of years per position, the findings above confirm that perceived external employability is influenced by mobility in career history. People who have changed employers and functions along their careers perceive themselves more attractive in the external labour market than those with more stable careers.

8.3.2 Employability Orientation and Employability Activities

The second group of employability measures is Employability Orientation and Employability Activities (Van Dam, 2004).

Employability orientation scale has six items, with a reported Cronbach's alpha of 0.78 (Van Dam, 2004). In the current research, the alpha Cronbach coefficient was 0.65. Employability activities scale is comprised by six items with a reported Cronbach's alpha of 0.76 (Van Dam, 2004). In the current research alpha Cronbach coefficient was 0.62.

Both measures show a positive correlation ($r=0.20$, $p<0.05$, 2-tailed) and can be seen as related but independent constructs.

The analysis indicates that in the whole sample the mean of employability orientation ($M=4.0$, $SD=0.44$) is higher than the one of employability activities ($M=3.7$, $SD=0.58$). Participants show positive attitudes to any kind of activity designed to improve their employability such as to participate in training or to be transferred to another area in their current organisation, however they are less involved in activities to improve their employability such as looking for better job options or participating in professional activities not directly related to their current employment.

Regarding age, a negative relationship is found between employability orientation,

employability activities and age (see table 5). More mature workers have less favourable perception of the activities designed to develop employability and, at the same time, are less involved in activities to improve their employability.

Employability orientation and employability activities scales show a negative correlation with organisational tenure and job tenure, significant being the relationship between organisational tenure and employability orientation ($r = 0.3$, $p < 0.01$, 2-tailed). People who have stayed longer in the same organisation show less positive attitudes to the activities developed to enhance personal employability when compared to those with fewer years of tenure. When tenure is controlled by age there is still a negative relationship, however not that significant.

In general terms, attitudes to employability are influenced by age, tenure and at lower extent by number of years per position. Younger workers and those with fewer years in their current organisation are more interested in improving their employability than more mature workers. However, since number of years per job does not correlate closely with employability orientation, this latter variable seems to be more affected by age.

Comparison among sectors shows a slightly higher score in employability orientation and activities in fishing industry than manufacturing and forestry sectors.

Between the companies that concentrate workers with the highest mobility (e.g. forestry II) and lowest mobility (textile company) the comparison between employability orientation and activities using independent-samples t-test indicates that there is a significant difference between the forestry company II ($M = 4.3$, $SD = 0.3$) and the textile company ($M = 3.8$, $SD = 0.6$; $t(23) = -2.1$, $p = 0.05$) in employability orientation.

However, it is important to note that using t-test to compare between the textile company and the forestry company II, it is found that there are also significant differences in age and tenure between both companies. Textile company shows

higher age and tenure in comparison to forestry II. These variables together with mobility influence employability orientation and activities.

When compared career paths I and II (two extreme cases in terms of mobility) in measures of employability orientation and activities, the comparison using t-test for independent samples shows that there are significant differences between career path I ($M=3.8$, $SD=0.5$) and career path II ($M=4.2$, $SD=0.3$, $t(43) = -2.7$, $p=0.08$) in employability orientation.

Career path II and IV show significant differences in terms of employability orientation. Career path II ($M=4.2$, $SD=0.3$) and career path IV ($M= 4$, $SD=0.4$, $t(45)=2.1$, $p=0.05$).

The results above indicate that there is a close relationship between age, mobility and employability orientation. Younger and more mobile workers have better attitudes to the activities oriented to develop employability compared to more mature workers with stable careers.

The findings previously described show correspondence with those cited in the literature. Considering perceived employability and its main predictors, the relationship with age is fully supported. Age is negatively related to employability in any of its measures. Results indicate that mobility plays an important role in perception of personal employability and attitudes towards employability. More mobile workers (lower organisational tenure and lower stability index) have more favourable perception of their external employability compared to less mobile workers and mobile workers show more positive attitudes to developing employability. Perceived internal employability and employability activities are also influenced by mobility, however in a lower extent.

The perception of personal attractiveness in the external labour market is positively and significantly correlated to employability orientation ($r= 0.32$, $p<0.01$, 2-tailed). Workers who see themselves as valuable in the external labour market tend to show

more positive attitudes to the activities oriented to improve employability compared to those with less positive self perception of their external options in the labour market.

It could be argued that the employability measures undertaken are different between both clusters not only in their definition but also in the way they behave in the sample under study.

Table 5

Correlation among work information and employability measures

		Age	Job Tenure	Organisational Tenure	Stability Index	Internal Employability	External Employability	Employability Orientation	Employability Activities
Age	Pearson Correlation								
	Sig. (bilateral)		,518(**)	,690(**)	,696(**)	-,091	-,465(**)	-,352(**)	-,185
	N	85	,000	,000	,000	,410	,000	,001	,095
Job Tenure	Pearson Correlation								
	Sig. (bilateral)	,518(**)		,622(**)	,721(**)	-,281(*)	-,460(**)	-,191	-,041
	N	,000	82	,000	,000	,011	,000	,089	,720
Organisational Tenure	Pearson Correlation								
	Sig. (bilateral)	,690(**)	,622(**)		,561(**)	-,157	-,523(**)	-,325(**)	-,138
	N	,000	,000	83	,000	,156	,000	,003	,219
Stability Index	Pearson Correlation								
	Sig. (bilateral)	,696(**)	,721(**)	,561(**)		-,141	-,484(**)	-,165	-,038
	N	83	80	83	78	83	82	81	81
Internal Employability	Pearson Correlation								
	Sig. (bilateral)	-,091	-,281(*)	-,157	-,141				
	N	,410	,011	,156	,213	80	79	78	78
External Employability	Pearson Correlation								
	Sig. (bilateral)	-,465(**)	-,460(**)	-,523(**)	-,484(**)	,347(**)		,324(**)	,242(*)
	N	,000	,000	,000	,000	,001		,003	,028
Employability Orientation	Pearson Correlation								
	Sig. (bilateral)	-,352(**)	-,191	-,325(**)	-,165	,039	,324(**)		
	N	,001	,089	,003	,150	,724	,003		,070
Employability Activities	Pearson Correlation								
	Sig. (bilateral)	-,185	-,041	-,138	-,038	,105	,242(*)	,200	
	N	,095	,720	,219	,740	,346	,028	,070	
		83	80	81	78	83	82	83	83

** Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (Sig. (2-tailed)). * Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (Sig. (2-tailed)).

8.4 Expected labour market position

Participants were asked to indicate their expected labour market position five years ahead in a closed-ended question with eight options of answer (Sanders and de Grip, 2004). The majority of the respondents (81 percent) expect to work in the same firm, either in the same position (27 percent) or other job (54 percent). Table 6 shows the frequency of each answer.

Table 6
Expected labour market position five years ahead

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Working in a similar job in this firm	23	27	27.1	27.1
	Working in a different job in this firm	46	54	54.1	81.2
	Working in a similar job in another firm	3	4	3.4	84.7
	Working in a different job in another firm	9	11	10.2	95.3
	Retired	1	1	1.1	96.5
	Do not Know	3	4	3.5	100.0
	Total	85	100.0	100.0	

The share of answers by age group shows that those older than 40 years project their future working in the same firm, either in similar or different job. As people become older the expectations to change company or jobs decrease.

According to sectors, there are differences in the expected labour market position. Seventy-five percent of workers from the fishing sector express their intentions to remain in the same employer, half of them also in the same position. This proportion reaches 92 percent in the case of workers from the manufacture industry, however in this group only 28 percent expect to remain in the same job. Forestry workers show higher intentions to move, 65 percent of them expect to work in the same company five years ahead and 50 percent expect to work in a different position.

In terms of companies, the expectations of future mobility show high variability. Workers from the main fishery in the sample (N=10), expect to remain in the same company and in the same position (six out of ten). All textile workers expect to continue working in the same company and 50 percent expect to do it in the same position. From the workers of the main company in the forestry sector, seven out of eleven expect to remain in the same company but all of them in a different position.

Concerning career path, there are differences in the expected labour market position in workers of each group. Those from career paths I and V (those who exhibit a history of one employer either working in multiple functions or in the same work line) expect to remain with the same employer. This percentage reaches 100 percent in the group of one employer-one work line and 89 percent in the group of one employer-multiple functions. From this last percentage, a share of 33 percent of them expects to change position.

The majority of workers who expect to move to another company in other positions are those with a history of multiple employers, different functions and low tenure (Career Path II). Apparently, people would expect to follow the same pattern of mobility they have had. Those who have been mobile expect to continue changing at least to another position in the near future.

The expectations to move in the future seem to be related to previous work history. There is a tendency to expect future mobility in the workers who have already had a history of mobility in their careers.

8.5 Identification measures

Social identification measures were undertaken to provide more antecedents to comprehend the relationship of career identity, mobility and employability. Since social identification is one of the components proposed in the construct of career identity, an initial exploration using quantitative methods was employed to set the stage for further analysis by means of a qualitative approach.

Three scales were used in the assessment of social identification: Organizational Identification (Mael and Ashforth, 1992), Professional Identification and Need of Organizational Identification (Kreiner and Ashforth, 2004). All were measured in a five-point Likert-type response scale ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree.

Organisational identification was comprised of six items. The reliability test shows a Cronbach's alpha of 0.77. The reported Cronbach's alpha was 0.90 in Kreiner and Ashforth, 2004.

Professional identification scale has six items. The reliability test shows a Cronbach's alpha of 0.88.

Need of organizational identification was composed of seven items. It shows a Cronbach's alpha of 0.63 and the reported reliability score was 0.75 in Kreiner and Ashforth (2004).

Organisational identification shows a mean of 4.2 (SD=0.55) in a five- point Likert-type scale higher than professional identification (3.7, SD=0.85) and need of organisational identification (3.8, SD=0.59). These results suggest that in general the workers surveyed tend to identify with the organisations they are working for, feel some kind of attachment to their professions and also need a company to identify with.

The three measures of identification relate directly and positively among them as it is shown in the table 7. People who identified with their professions also tended to identify with their organisations. It could be hypothesised a general tendency to identify with social objects.

The relationship between age and measures of social identification is not significant. Identification in the work context seems to follow the same pattern regardless age and the same is valid for the need of organisational identification. Regarding tenure

and social identification there is no significant relationship. The length of time in the same organisation and job is indicative neither of organisational and professional identification nor of need of organisational identification.

When social identification is related to stability along the career no significant relationship exists. Length of time per job do not relate to identification with the organisation nor with the need of organisational identification. As opposed to what it could be expected, workers with longer time in an organisation and job, do not necessarily show higher identification with their companies compared to those with lower tenure.

To identify the degree of variability among sectors in identification measures, the non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted. It indicates that there are no significant differences in identification measures among the three sectors studied.

When analysed identification measures across companies, there are no significant differences among all the companies using the Kruskal-Wallis test. Also, by means of an independent-samples t-test, no statistical difference is found between social identification measures in the two companies with extreme degrees of mobility.

Comparison of means in identification measures across career paths I and II using t-test indicates that there are no significant differences between both groups.

In the analysis of the relationship between employability measures and identification measures, the results indicate a positive and significant relationship between perception of internal employability and organisational identification ($r= 0.37$, $p<0.01$ level). Workers who identified with their companies also feel that they are valued resources within their organisations. In addition, a significant relationship exists between employability activities and professional identification ($r= 0.33$, $p<0.01$, 2-tailed). Workers who are actively involved in the improvement of their employability at the same time are involved in their own professions.

Table 7
Correlation among tenure and social identification measures

		Age	Job Tenure	Organisational Tenure	Stability Index	Organisational Identification	Professional Identification	Need of Organisational Identification
Age	Pearson Correlation		,518(**)	,690(**)	,696(**)	,119	,005	,111
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,000	,000	,000	,280	,964	,318
	N	85	82	83	80	84	74	83
Job Tenure	Pearson Correlation	,518(**)		,622(**)	,721(**)	,098	,089	,030
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000		,000	,000	,382	,461	,792
	N	82	82	80	77	81	71	80
Organisational Tenure	Pearson Correlation	,690(**)	,622(**)		,561(**)	,067	-,033	,080
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000		,000	,552	,785	,480
	N	83	80	83	78	82	72	81
Stability Index	Pearson Correlation	,696(**)	,721(**)	,561(**)		,198	,110	,108
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000		,080	,359	,343
	N	80	77	78	80	79	71	79
Organisational Identification	Pearson Correlation	,119	,098	,067	,198		,409(**)	,483(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,280	,382	,552	,080		,000	,000
	N	84	81	82	79	84	74	83
Professional Identification	Pearson Correlation	,005	,089	-,033	,110	,409(**)		,562(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,964	,461	,785	,359	,000		,000
	N	74	71	72	71	74		73
Need of Organisational Identification	Pearson Correlation	,111	,030	,080	,108	,483(**)	,562(**)	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,318	,792	,480	,343	,000	,000	
	N	83	80	81	79	83	73	83

** Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (Sig. (2-tailed))

** Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (Sig. (2-tailed))

8.6 Summary of findings

Eighty-five middle managers participated in the quantitative phase of the study. A brief overview of the sample shows that they are widely spread in terms of age, ranging from 30 to 62 years old, with a mean of 41.3 years. The sample is more uniform in terms of education since the 96 percent have studied after the secondary school, and 82 percent have graduate degrees. There are three sectors participating in the study and 22 companies.

Tenure information shows a mean of 10.9 years for organisational tenure and 6.2 years of job tenure. The number of jobs participants have held during their work life ranges from 1 to 6 with an average of 3.7, the average time per position is 5.7 years.

According to information of number of employers, tenure and degree of stability, five career paths are identified. Data collected suggest that changes in employer increase the chances of mobility. People who have changed employers show more mobility than those who remain in the same company in different jobs.

There are differences amongst the sectors in mobility rates. Forestry has workers with the highest levels of mobility (however, the highest proportion of younger workers) from the three sectors studied. When analysing amongst companies, differences in mobility are more extreme. Workers from the textile company show the lowest level of mobility, they exhibit the highest tenure and a mean of years per position higher than the average of the total sample.

Analysis reveals that data of perceived employability follow the same pattern suggested by the literature and previous research (Eby et al., 2004). Age is related to perception of employability, being especially significant the relationship with external employability. More mature workers perceive themselves less attractive in the external labour market than younger workers. In the group aged less than 40 the

mean of perceived external employability is 3.8, in the group 41 to 60 this measure drops to 3.2. Moreover, the stability index indicates a negative and significant relationship between number of years per job and perception of external employability. These findings confirm the assumption that changes in jobs or across companies influence the judgment of personal employability.

When the analysis of perceived employability is focused on the companies that are the extreme cases in terms of mobility, there are significant differences between them in perceived external employability measures. This data also support the notion that perception of personal attractiveness in the external labour market is influenced by mobility.

The expected labour market position in the sample is to continue working in the same company and job (27 percent) and in the same company but in a different job (54 percent). Age is related to the expectations to move to another job or firm in the near future. More mature workers expect to remain in the same job and company.

Future career positions seem to be related to previous career history. More mobile workers expect to move in the near future.

The results indicate that there is a negative relationship, at a significant level, between age, mobility and employability orientation. Younger workers and those with lower tenure show more favourable attitudes to employability compared to more mature workers and those with higher tenure.

In relation to identification measures the analysis reveals that the sample tends to identify to great extent with their organisations and professions. Organisational identification is not related, at significant level, to the number of jobs someone has had neither to the average time per jobs. According to previous research, it could be expected that identification with the organisation is closely related to the time spent in one company, however, current findings do not support that notion.

Measures of identification are highly correlated among them; people who identify with their professions also tend to identify with their organisations. When comparing identification measures among groups of different ages and sectors, the results do not show significant differences. Addressing identification through a more comprehensive way might add a better understanding of this process.

Results indicate that age and mobility are critical variables in estimating perceived employability and confirm the higher risk of mature workers in the labour market compared with those in prime age.

Further information is required to understand exactly how age and mobility influence employability and also to comprehend the impact of these variables on attitudes and behaviours oriented to develop employability.

8.7 Quantitative analysis and results for the second sample

Through a purposive sampling process 22 cases from the initial sample of the questionnaire survey were selected to participate in the in-depth interviews (however, the final sample of interviewees comprised 25 participants). The selection process was based on age (those 39 to 50 years) and cases that provide variety in terms of occupations, sectors, companies and degree of specialization. Criteria of availability were also considered.

8.7.1. General description of the sample

Twenty five subjects comprised the sample of interviewees, they are all male, middle-managers aged between 39 to 50 years. The mean of age was 42.7 years old ($SD=3.2$). Regarding marital status 20 participants are married, two singles and three separated/divorced.

Concerning education, 92 percent of the sample has a university degree, mainly in the engineering field in subjects such as chemistry, mechanics, electronics, forestry and management. Two participants are experts in health and safety. The share of interviewees with MBA and diplomas in management was 48 percent. Participants have all received some kind of training in the year prior to the interview.

The sample has an average of 11 years of organisational tenure and five years of job tenure with a mean of five years per job held. The table below shows a comparison of the total sample, the group aged 39 to 50 and the sample of interviewees.

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics of age and work information in the total sample, group aged 39-50 and group of interviewees

		Total Sample (N=85)	Group aged 39-50 (N=42)	Interviewees group (N=22)
Age	N	85	42	22
	Mean	41.3	42.9	42.7
	S D	7.5	3.4	3.2
Number of jobs	N	85	42	6
	Mean	3.7	3.9	4.2
	SD	1.1	1.3	1.2
Organisational Tenure	N	83	41	22
	Mean	10.9	11.2	11
	SD	8.6	5.1	4.8
Job Tenure	N	82	40	20
	Mean	6.2	7.2	5.5
	SD	5.9	5.2	4.2
Stability Index	N	80	37	22
	Mean	5.7	5.8	4.9
	SD	4.7	3.3	1.8

Interviewees come from 13 companies, from the three industries analysed.

Manufacturing accounts for 61 percent of them, 13 percent belong to Forestry companies and 22 percent to the fishing sector (Table 9).

Table 9

Frequency of sectors participating in the total sample, group aged 39-50 and group of interviewees

		Total Sample (N=85)	Group aged 39-50 (N=42)	Interviewees group (N=22)
Fishing	Frequency	12	9	3
	Percentage	14	21	14
Manufacturing	Frequency	37	17	11
	Percentage	44	41	50
Forestry	Frequency	36	16	8
	Percentage	42	38	36

8.7.2 Career Paths

Five career paths were identified from the participants of the questionnaire-survey. The share of career paths in the sample of interviewees (n=25) is comprised of career path I, one employer-multiple functions with a 32 percent of the sample; career path II, multiple employers- different functions-low tenure account for 18 percent; career path III, multiple employers-one work line has 23 percent and career path IV, multiple employers-different functions-high tenure is comprised by 27 percent of the group of interviewees. Comparison in frequencies of career paths among the three samples is presented in the annexe VII, table VII.1.

From the workers in career path I (those who have performed in one company in different functions), 6 out of 8 expect to remain in the same company in different functions five years ahead. Four out of 5 from the career path III (those who have performed in one work line) expect to remain in the same type of job. To some extent previous mobility is an antecedent of future mobility, people expect to follow the same type of movement they have had in the past. Only one of the interviewees anticipated a radical movement (to work in another job in another company) five years ahead. The annexe VIII.1 presents an analysis of the work information and career movements in a sample of interviewees.

8.7.3 Employability measures

As in the general sample, the group of interviewees shows higher levels of perceived internal employability compared to external employability, so they see themselves more valuable within the current company than in the external market. They express their agreement to activities that improve personal employability and also are engaged in these activities.

Annexe VII table VII.2 shows a comparison among the total sample, the group aged 39 to 50 and the group of interviewees in different measures of employability.

8.7.4 Expected labour market position

Regarding the expected labour market position five years ahead, 82 percent of the interviewees expect to remain in the same employer, from them, 23 percent think they will be in the same job and 59 percent in a different one. A comparative table with information of expected labour market position in the total sample, the group aged 39-50 and the sample of interviewees is presented in the annexe VII, table VII.3.

8.7.5 Social identification measures

Regarding identification measures, the group of interviewees shows high identification with their organisation and professions, following the same tendency of the general sample, as shown in the annexe VII table VII.4.

8.7.6 Overview

Careers course in the sample of interviewees tend to unfold in a small number of settings since the 32 percent of the group has had one or two employers. In terms of type of changes, careers can be characterised by upward movements, in the same or different functions, within a company. More radical changes, such as changes in employers, functions and status account for around 19 percent of all the changes produced.

The general expectation in the group is to remain in the same company following the same path they have had, thus, workers who have performed in different companies, in a variety of roles with high mobility (career Path II) expect to continue changing functions and the group with lower mobility show the largest proportion of workers who expect to remain in the same company and similar job.

Those who expect to remain in a similar job but in another company are specialists who have been working in the same work line during their entire career. It is possible

to suggest that specialization serve as an antecedent to develop occupational careers and to keep independence from employers.

Career paths developed by the sample follow the same tendency that the main group. Higher mobility tends to be experienced at early stages of the career.

The group of interviewees is slightly more mobile than the group of the same age not interviewed. Also, the share of manufacturing workers in the interviewees is slightly higher than in the other two groups. However, in general the sample of interviewees shows similar characteristics than the general sample and the sample of individuals of the same age, not interviewed.

Regarding employability and identification measures, results indicate a generalized perception of being attractive in the internal and external labour markets, positive attitudes to the improvement of personal employability and high identification with their companies and professions. Since the group is comprised by managers who had progressed in their current organisations it is expected that they perceived themselves as valued resources within the company and time to show identification with the organisations that have rewarded them.

In reference to identification measures, the group expressed their identification with their organisations and professions and at the same time, however in a minor extent, their needs to identify with groups.

Measures of employability and social identification are similar among the three samples.

To sum up, the majority of the interviewees have developed their careers in a small number of settings and they do not expect mobility outside the current employment in the near future. The analysis of career courses and future expectations position them closer to the organisation-based careers rather than the boundaryless careers.

Interviewees do not show significant differences, in terms of the main variables studied, with the rest of the sample.

Chapter IX

Qualitative Analysis and Results

Career meanings

Data from the questionnaire survey reveal a variety of relationships that help to understand employability and the factors associated. However, it is unknown what the internal processes behind these relationships are.

If number and variety of work experiences influence the perception of how attractive someone is in the labour market, it is important to understand what the processes involved are and, how and through which means some experiences or patterns along the career can affect, for example, the perception of chances to find another job.

This research suggests that career identity plays a role in this relationship and assumes that due to the evolving and longitudinal nature of identity and careers, interpretive methods would provide more richness and explicative capacity.

In order to further understand the relationship between identity and employability, two main aspects are identified, they are the focus of the research questions and both are addressed in this study. The first one is related to the meanings of career that individuals hold and the second one is the construct of career identity developed in Chapter X.

Career meanings are understood as the results of the process by which individuals make sense of careers both as institutions and as personal experiences. Individuals have personal and collectively based notions of what careers are and this knowledge acts as a personal guide as well as guiding scripts for career development. Identifying themes through a narrative approach, allows to access to these meanings. These meanings are addressed and analysed in this chapter.

To begin a general profile of the second sample and its patterns of mobility are presented. It includes the reasons for the job changes they have undertaken, their career expectations and future career options.

9.1. Second sample: General description and jobs changes

9.1.1 General description

Twenty five subjects comprised the sample of interviewees, they are all male, middle-managers aged between 39 to 50 years. The mean of age was 42.7 years old ($SD=3.2$). Regarding education, 92 percent of the sample are graduates, mainly in the engineering field in subjects such as chemistry, mechanics, electronics, forestry and management. Two participants are experts in health and safety. The share of interviewees with MBA and diplomas in management is 48 percent. All of them have received some kind of training in the year prior to the interview.

9.1.2 Job changes

Using the typology of job changes proposed by Nicholson and West (1989) based on movements across employers, functions and status, data collected show that from 100 movements in the sample, in-spiralling moves (changes in function, towards higher status within the same company) are the most common reaching 22 percent. This type is followed by out-spiralling moves (different function towards higher status position in a different company) with 19 percent and changes in employers in the same work line that account for 19 percent of all job moves. Promotion represents 13 percent of the job changes of the sample.

9.1.3 Reasons for job changes

When describing their career trajectories participants explain and interpret the changes they have experienced and the events or circumstances that have generated

them. These events or situations include company needs (such as a new vacancy or required expertise in other area) which is the most cited reason and represents 37 percent of the all causes mentioned, followed by the need to do something more challenging and fulfilling (16 percent of the all reasons); to change factors that workers dislike such as bad climate and night shifts (12 percent), end of contracts and redundancy (10 percent), the same proportion mention needs to get more money and increase standard of living. Structural changes in the organisations such as mergers and bankrupt represent the 4 percent of the reasons mentioned. Other factors comprise needs of more stability and security, work in a field closer to the area of study/expertise and factors such as location and family well-being.

These reasons can be classified into two broader types of motives: Self-directed and circumstantial. Self-directed motives include transitions initiated by the person and account for 48 percent from the all reasons stated by the participants. Among self-directed changes, some of them can be classified as personally driven (such as looking for something more fulfilling) which account for 33 percent of the self-directed motives and the rest can be described as 'avoidance' or motives in which the person tries to escape a current situation (67 percent).

On the other hand, 52 percent of the changes can be classified as circumstantial or externally initiated (such as made redundant or company needs). So, it is apparent that career changes in the sample are mainly driven by external circumstances, especially organisation's needs.

Regarding the expected labour market position, results indicate that interviewees expect to remain in the same company (82 percent), either in the different position (59 percent) or the same (23 percent). Nine percent of the interviewees think they will be working in the same work line but in another company and five percent in another job in another company. One interviewee indicated that he does not know what his future position will be.

When exploring in more depth the reasons for their decisions, three groups can be identified: one group of participants refers to be 'entertained' in the current job, to have options of learning and good work conditions such as salary, location, flexible work hours, and they do not expect to change jobs in the short term, as it is shown in the cases below.

Case 72, 40 years old, timber company

"This change came in the right moment... It was two years, from the beginning of that project, it was very intense... when it finished I thought 'what's next?'...so now I'm starting a new and intense period again"

Case 76, 39 years old, sawmill

(And what comes next?) "I don't know, I'm still learning. It's not time to move yet"

There is another group that has reached a certain degree of control and predictability in their jobs. Some of them experience this condition as routine and lack of novelty, despite that they prefer to remain in their current position. Among the factors cited to stay are: to be too mature to change, economic reasons, to be 'used to' and lack of clarity about future projects.

Case 04, 47 years old, sawmill

"I have a relaxed work time, I can go out wherever I want and my job is reasonably paid... I receive a car and these sorts of things are hidden salary... I value it and you think about that when thinking about moving... along the years one starts to feel comfortable and lazy and you don't want to move, one wants to be relaxed, to have time to think, not being in the day to day fight"

Within the same group, some participants perceive difficulties to change their current work situation, however, they explore some personal ways to access to a more satisfying condition, as in the examples below.

Case 60, 50 years old, manufacturing company

"I can tell you that despite all the things I do, now I feel like stagnate, I am going through that kind of moment, so I'm thinking to study, I am looking for a program to do something next year, to study something, I don't know, maybe languages, foreign trade, finances...I don't know... I have two degrees, but I

need to go out, to refresh my knowledge, interact with classmates, to go back to the life as a student”

Case 37, 50, textile company

“Where am I going? I’m not going anywhere, because of my age, I’m 50. At the moment, my expectations within the company are the same, but I will follow my own development, my self-esteem...if not I’m going to be as one colleague said, just a sergeant, because we are all engineers, our boss is engineer and he is our same age. However, pursuing your own development you can be happy”

The last group is composed by individuals that are not satisfied with their current jobs and think they will be doing something different in the near future.

Case 93, 45 years old, canning factory

“Yes, I’ve started to feel restless, I feel like I already did what I had to, so what do I have to do now? I think... to do something else, I shouldn’t be here”

Case 27, 42 years old, fishing company

“This year I start feeling restive, it is like...I’ve always been in the fishery sector, but I think... I’m already 42 years, and I’m looking for a change, a break, I feel the need to produce a break in my life but I haven’t prepared myself yet...I don’t know”

9.2 Themes in career stories

Following the research questions the preliminary analysis is focused on the meanings participants give to the concept of career and the extent to which those meanings are closer to the ‘traditional’ or ‘new’ view of career.

A coding scheme was developed based on some predefined categories and inductively derived from the interview transcripts. Interviews were coded and recoded which involved elaboration and modification of the coding scheme. The analysis was assisted by the use of NVivo v.2 (2002).

This section begins with the main themes that emerge from managers' career stories. Then, these contents are organised into more inclusive categories, named here as dimensions, which describe the themes into polarities.

Themes comprise notions of agency; serendipity; learning, stability, job security and money issues, upgrading, orientation to the future, resilience, age concerns and mobility and change. There is an important inter-individual variability regarding the presence of the themes identified and the relative emphasis amongst themes is valuable to differentiate career stories. Also, participants' meanings provide helpful information in the analysis of the relationship between narratives and employability.

The main themes are described below and some excerpts are presented.

9.2.1 Agency and Communion

Themes of agency encompass concepts such as strength, power, expansion, mastery, control, dominance, autonomy, separation and independence. McAdams (1996) describes four sub-themes, which go above and beyond the typical agentic rhetoric of autobiographical expression. The sub-themes are status/victory, achievement/responsibility, self-mastery and empowerment.

Each sub-theme is briefly explained, its relevance and significance are assessed.

In the status/victory sub-theme the protagonist achieves higher status or prestige among his or her peers through receiving special recognition or honour or winning a contest competition. McAdams (1996) stresses the interpersonal and implicitly competitive context in status/victory sub theme.

Content of victory is pervasive in the respondents' career stories. At least ten out of 25 participants make an explicit reference to one or more episodes of winning or obtaining an outcome that surpasses others, as is seen in the excerpts below:

Case 80, 42 years old, manufacturing company

“Suddenly a vacancy appeared and from the six processes supervisors I was the 6th, the others had much more experience than me, I was a newcomer...the production manager asked me whether I was available to fill the position. Of course, I was”

Case 50, 44 years old, manufacturing company

“Afterwards I knew that during the four months of the process of recruitment, we were 200 applicants and then 100, then 50... 3... and finally I got the position. I didn't know this story until the acquisition manager said to me ‘you must have known the general manager’ and I said, no!! I came here like everyone, I applied through the paper, and then I had all the psychological tests, interviews, and that's why I am here. Then I thought, wow, that's good, it was an important success”

Case 93, 45 years old, canning factory

“In 1996 I left the maintenance department as one of the best in the area... actually one of our ships was positioned 13th in the world ranking and this is really worthwhile because it was an old ship and at the end it was working like a clock...”

“They said to me ‘if you catch x quantity of fish we will give you a prize, a trip to Cancun with your wife’... and of course I got it... Because I've always enjoyed being challenged”

“I have won all the prizes they've given to me”

Achievement/Responsibility sub-themes inform about substantial success in the achievement of tasks, jobs, instrumental goals or in the assumption of important responsibilities. The protagonist of the story feels proud, masterful, accomplished or successful because overcoming important obstacles concerning instrumental achievement in life or for taking on major responsibilities for other people and assuming roles that require the person to be in charge of things or people. McAdams states that rather than ‘winning’ this category requires that the protagonist strives to do things or assume responsibilities in such a way as to meet an implicit or explicit standard of excellence (McAdams, 2001).

Codes of achievement/responsibility are the most mentioned in the interviews. From the group, 56 percent made explicit reference to one or more episodes that indicate

accomplishment, being successful or assuming important responsibilities of material or human resources.

Case 91, 39 years old, forestry company

“From managing a budget of 2 millions of pesos I came to an operative plan of 120 millions, so you start managing the unity as a business and from last year my dependency changed from the area manager to the general manager”

Self-mastery gives account of those efforts people do in order to control, enlarge or perfect the self. It is closely linked to themes of personal development stated before and refers to the ability of someone to strengthen the self, to become a larger, wiser or more powerful agent in the world. Two common expressions of self-mastery involve the achievement of dramatic insight into the meaning of life and also the experience of greatly sense of control over the destiny in the wake of an important event. Four out of 25 (16 percent) stories show codes of self-mastery. Compared to other dimensions of agency, self-mastery together with empowerment, are those with lower presence in participants career's accounts.

Case 24, 40 years old, manufacturing company

“In the past I was tremendously impulsive...if I wanted something I got it no matter how.... Nobody could take something out of my mind, now I am more patient, more relaxed...I used to fire people every Friday and I didn't care... it didn't matter if the guy had a family... now I have learnt that life is not black or white, I am more tolerant, more considerate with other people, I've definitely learnt... What made me learn was the fact that when we were installing a new management system, someone who I had to train, decided to resign...”

“There is a fundamental accomplishment in my life... my main achievement has been to know myself...what I am looking for... where I want to go... to understand what and why I feel what I feel...mmmhh, it is not a growth due to professional development... it's a way to live as a more complete human being”

Case 76, 39 years old, sawmill

“As time goes by... it helps me to be more mature, I am a very hyperactive person, very passionate... I used to be angry and get out of control and as time goes by I've become quieter.... I've been through situations that have taught me... I've realized that the experiences from all these years have helped me a lot”

People can develop a sense of control not only over the environment but also over themselves. Some facts in the career prompt important processes of self-development and personal growth. In other cases it is a questioning and revision of previous experiences that elicits some changes. In any case the changes are experienced as highly important and revealing. These findings in some way confirm the proposal of Levinson et al. (1978) regarding the relevance of the self and the reappraisal that people undertake at midlife.

In the sub-theme Empowerment the subject is enlarged, enhanced, ennobled, or made better through the relationship of the person with someone or something larger and more powerful than the self. The self is made even more agentic by virtue of its involvement with an even more powerful agent of some sort. In empowerment theme, the empowering force is usually either God, or a highly influential teacher, mentor, parent, grandparent or authority figure who provides critical assistance or guidance for the individual. From all agentic themes, empowerment is mentioned by 16 percent of the all interviewees.

Case 89, 39 years old, fishing company

“My boss used to say to me: ‘study, study, study’... every time we talked he said ‘study, make the most of your time, study’ and I said why am I going to study? I already have a position, I just have to take care of it and I am not going to move from here”

“It was a scary time for all of us, the uncertainty was incredible and I remembered the words of my boss when he encouraged me to study... and I said, OK I am going to study, I am going to finish what I left inconclusive, and I thought if I am leaving this company at least it should be with a degree... if not I am going to feel bad...then I studied business”

Themes of agency are present in almost all the interviews and also each subcategory shows different patterns across the career accounts collected. Contents of achievement/responsibility and status/victory are extensively present and it can be inferred that notions of success and accomplishment in more external and explicit

forms, such as being promoted, winning a competition or accessing higher positions, are some of the aspects that men highlight in their career accounts.

This is confirmed when interviewees were asked for the higher points in their careers. Eleven themes are identified and the most cited are related to achievement, upgrading, social recognition, salary improvements, continuing studies and travelling. Self-mastery codes appear in fewer stories compared to the other codes of agency.

Agency and communion are seen as thematic clustering along which life narratives are organised (McAdams, 1993; 2001). Contents of agency and communion are described as opposite. According to Marshal (1989) both themes are 'basic coping strategies for dealing with the uncertainties and anxieties of being alive' (p.279). Quoting Bakan (as cited in McAdams, 2001 and Marshal, 1989), agency stresses the need to master and communion is characterised by contact, union and cooperation.

Agency tries to exert control over the environment, communion instead deals with the uncertainties through acceptance and personal adjustment. As Weick (1996) points out communion is about readiness and adaptability just as agency is about initiative and adaptation.

Using the proposal of McAdams concerning the themes that integrate both clusters, themes of agency are widely represented in the stories collected. Specific contents of achievement, victory, empowerment and self-mastery described males' accounts of career. Communion was also described in terms of its components: love/friendship, dialogue; caring/help, unity/togetherness (McAdams, 1993; 2001); however, they seem to be more applicable to life stories rather than career stories.

In the context of career, contents of communion were described by Marshal (1989) and offer a useful approach to be used in this research. Marshal (1989) asserts that communion as opposite to agency does not seek change, instead it accepts change 'communion's main strategies for dealing with the world are acceptance and

adjustment... communion does not try to stabilize its environment but expects and accepts change and adapts' (Marshall, 1989, p. 279). The author adds that communion is essentially present oriented and the approach to planning is adapting to personal rhythms rather than goal oriented. Notions of openness, tolerance and trust are descriptive of communion and that it works through non-contractual cooperation without expecting exact retribution from others.

This notion of communion as acceptance and adjustment is widely present in the careers accounts collected. The following examples depict communion contents.

Case 71, 45 years old, moulding factory

"I never complain about anything, never, never, you may think I am conformist or even pusillanimous, but I never complain at all. If I can be characterised in some way, it is that I am able to balance, to level any change, any alteration in the environment or in a group, I'm always in peace as you see me now"

(Telling about an illness) "I've always accepted it... it was my mother who fought against my problem"

Case 87, 43 years old, manufacturing company

(About his wife) "(Without her) I've been more fearful, I've had done less things that I actually have done. If I've done some things it has been due to her... she is much braver than me...now we have three houses because of her... if it had been up to me I'd have had just one and small... if it is enough for all of us why should it be a bigger one?"

"(When transferred to another position) At the beginning I didn't take it in a good mood... and then I said to myself, I am paid to work, I don't need to enjoy my job, I've to do it and do it well"

"After that, they said that apart from the environmental functions I had to take safety... and I said 'I don't agree'...people in this area weren't the best... so I said, 'No, I don't want'...because the one to whom originally this task was assigned, wanted to get rid of it... and then they said, 'it is good for you because you need to know all the areas and this one is very important for the company', so I said OK... I couldn't say no"

Communion might be related to the degree of self-management in personal careers. In the next sample a worker makes an explicit statement about his feeling of lack of influence in shaping his career.

Case 79, 44 years old, manufacturing company

“I do my job... I don’t look at what I have to do in order to get to the next position, I try to do things in the best way I can, the things I like and those I don’t like...but I haven’t been someone who has managed his career... I have just been focused on doing my job well and I think that’s enough, and the results demonstrate that”
(After moving to another area in his job) “Yes, I addressed a different area” (Did you choose it?)

“Not at all. Someone else chose it for me”

Agency and communion are in close relationship with content of future. People with an agentic style tend to have detailed plans with strategies to fulfil them; as opposed, individuals with communion attitudes refer to broader purposes on life and mention the notion of ‘dream’.

Due to the nature of the interview, participants tend to highlight episodes that depict agentic attitudes, such as achievements, responsibilities and acknowledgments in their work lives. However, in the analysis of the career stories as a whole, different patterns can be differentiated according to the dominant orientation, either agency or communion. As it will be explained later, some stories highlight episodes of agency and at the same time this is an orientation that pervades the complete career story of the individual. On the other hand, some participants, even though mention episodes of agency, the dominant approach to career is a different one, characterised for adjustment and acceptance or a communion orientation. So, despite the relevance of themes of agency, in the case-centred analysis stories can be differentiated according to the relative dominance of agency and communion themes.

9.2.2 Serendipity

Contents that emphasised the notion of chance, fortune, unplanned changes and unforeseen events are also common in the stories collected. Career’s accounts present clear references to unexpected facts that change the course to which careers unfold and had significant effects in individuals’ lives and careers. The excerpts below inform the notion of casualty in career choice.

Case 27, 42 years old, fishing company

“...It was a matter of destiny, I liked this major (Physical Education) and I got the option to study Kinesiology... however... suddenly, as if fate would have had it, I was going to register and I didn't get to physical education department, I arrived to fishery department, things of life... I took the lift, the doors opened and without knowing I found myself in the fishing studies department. I was just a boy, and I started looking at the poster and advertisement, I was surprised, I felt in tune with all of those things, I saw the curriculum and I liked it, then I came back to register...it was a twist of fate”

“I always have had in mind that a company would take me and say to me: ‘Juan, with all your experience... (why don't) do consultancy, to give all your knowledge... it doesn't need to be in a fishing company, I have dreamt about that... I am not a good speaker, but I can stay for a long time talking about all I have learnt for a long time...to explain what a production line means”

“Sometimes one wants to explore... but, what are the means I have? I should start searching, what else can I do?”

“I found myself with the bad experience that the fishery was close down”

The sample above described how the career choice was an unplanned event. Also, the passive voice in the language, ‘being taken by someone’, ‘being given the chance to’ and ‘found myself in’ might indicate a diminished sense of control over the circumstances.

9.2.3 Learning

Learning appears as a fundamental aspect in career and professional development in the men interviewed. Narratives of career give account of the developing of knowledge and skills, and learning experiences they have had. From the group interviewed, 56 percent refer to training and the positive experiences related. In a retrospective view of their careers, 24 percent of interviewees mention that the acquisition of new skills and knowledge about their jobs and relationships is the defining and critical component in their professional development. Degrees and qualification are also stressed. Reasons or intentions for job change are related, to some extent, to the learning opportunities a new position offers.

Case 91, 39 years old, forestry company

(Talking about his higher points) I think it is this job because I've had more variety than in X... there I grew quite a lot, and in Y it was a very tough experience and I feel like there I grew a lot but in a different sort of matters, not in professional terms, it was a mix of different things... it is the strong experience you have in life that helps you to be calm, to have clarity, to be able to take risks... it was hard for me to take risks and to close cycles... I also we had many crisis that marked you. In X was like the ideal, always moving forward"

"I came here very happy, I've learnt a lot, I am going to turn two years in this position but I already have learnt a lot and I've grown, I've had huge changes"

In a related area, participants mention having a mentor as an important opportunity for learning. Close relationship with others, mainly in supervising roles, is recognized by the interviewees as having influence on the development of instrumental skills and competencies.

Case 89, 39 years old, fishing company

"They asked me to do this and that, and it was OK, it helped me to learn. So then I was learning acquisitions and then remunerations and at the end I learnt a little bit from everything"

"I had the thrust of my boss, and I did all the things he wanted, at the end he moulded the person he wanted to work here, he made me as a worker, I was his mirror, he said to me 'today you are not going to receive any suppliers' and I did what he said without complaints, if he said 'I need this' I stayed at the office until I finished, he thrust on me, I really appreciate him, he was the one who opened the doors for me"

Learning is mainly focused on instrumental aspects such as developing new skills, obtaining updated information in some specialized field or extending the expertise to areas related to the own field.

A fewer proportion of the interviewees mentioned learning in different domains, such as personal growth. For example, the access to a managerial position meant for some of them an important experience of personal learning and self-awareness.

Case 27, 42 years old, fishing company

“A new mill was opened and everything was starting. I was starting as a leader as well, without any experience, I didn’t even know what being a leader meant...technically I knew my job, but I had no idea about the human resources. Suddenly I was in front of a miner, he was the double my size! Before I was an assistant and I received orders, but then I was the owner of the shift...I was in charge of 350 people and I learnt over the road, initially I didn’t speak to the people... there was too much noise so I whistled to them...one day somebody went to me and asked me to give them a minute to have a free talk, there were 200 people in front of me...and the first thing they mentioned was not to whistle...I didn’t do that to lessen... nobody told me that I shouldn’t do it... nobody taught me how to be a boss... I will never forget this experience... it had a strong impact in myself...I never whistled again...I always remember that fact... it was a lady who asked me not to do it... I have this image clear in my mind until now...”

9.2.4 Stability, job security and money issues

These themes appear frequently in career narratives especially to emphasize the degree of satisfaction with the position and also as an incentive to move to another job. Financial security and increase in salary are amongst the aspects mentioned as higher points in the career. As opposed, lack of stability, unemployment and economic constraints account for the main themes mentioned as lower points in the career. From the group, 24 percent make reference to the need of stability and 28 percent feel secure in their current job.

Case 89, 39 years old, fishing company

“That was my first salary and I thought ‘this is too much money!!’ Compared to what I earned before that was a lot of money”

The same case, some years later in the same job

“If a bank said to me, ‘we pay you 200 pesos more than the fishery’. I would leave. This is the last life decision I have taken”

The need for stability and security is closely related to family issues. Participants make reference of their responsibilities as the main providers in the family and also

the freedom to take risk they had at the beginning of their careers. Some of them mention that new options of career development will be considered in later stages when their family commitments are finished.

Workers are aware of the lack of stability in the current work environment. For some it represents a real threat in their lives, for fewer of them the idea of being fired is not perceived as risks and for others there is a sense of security in their current positions. No matter which is the dominant perception, issues of stability and job security are pervasive in participant's career accounts.

Case 09, 39 years old, forestry company

(Did you feel insecure?) "Yes, always, I didn't have any control and that made me keep on looking, being aware of what I would do in case (of being fired). Our manager always said that we had to have a plan B and I had it. I took that insecurity as a strength, because it keeps you alert, you are always looking at the market, searching for opportunities, it helped me to see far away from what I did... we are always too much focused on our own jobs"

Case 4, 47 years old, forestry company

"As long as the time goes by what someone wants is stability, however, there is stability until certain degree, no one can guaranty anything..."

The analysis suggests that content associated to money and work stability occupy larger parts of the career stories in younger workers and in those that being middle-managers are in lower status positions.

Characteristics of the company are highlighted and considered in the decision-making process of job change. Aspects of stability, economic backup and continuity along time are taken into account when facing the possibility of change.

Case 71, 45 years old, sawmill company

"What I do value from this company is its stability... in the past 13 years I have seen everything: different problems, Asian crisis, recessions and we are always producing at full capacity"

9.2.5 Upgrading

The notion of upgrading is persistent along the career stories collected and its understanding is closely tied to upward mobility, promotion, increasing status, power and social recognition.

Forty-eight percent of the interviewees highlight experiences of being promoted in their jobs and for some of them these experiences are turning points in their careers. Accessing a new position is perceived for a proportion of the group as a natural step in their professional development, something that they, to some extent, are expecting and it represents a sort of continuity in their professional lives. Most of these changes are led by the company and mainly predicted by the employee according to the logical sequences of movements in the organisation. In other cases, the promotion, even though welcomed, represents an important turning point in individuals' career and it is an important factor of discontinuity in their lives, as in the examples below.

Case 89, 39 years old, fishing company

“They said to me...from today your job will change, you are not going to be an assistant anymore, now you are the manager of acquisitions... and then they said my new salary and I thought ‘oh my God, what am I going to do with all that money?’”

9.2.6 Orientation to the future

Another area in which reside participants concerns reside is the future. Interviewees make reference to what lies ahead and differ among them in the importance assigned to stating goals, planning the future or seeking broader purposes in life. There are important differences in this topic. Some interviewees have very clear notion of what they want or need in the future and have well formed strategies to reach their goals (16 percent); on the other hand, there are some participants who have a loose

approach and refer to broader purposes in life with no tendency to plan in advance (32 percent).

Case 24, 40 years old, manufacturing company

“I am the type that is always looking for, looking for solutions, (trying) that everything flows nicely, without big frights... I am the one who plans everything. Before my children were born I had the school stuff already bought”
“I am always reading, thinking, talking... I need to be ahead of things, I don’t want to need to solve a problem... I am paid to think in advance... that makes me happy”

The notion of projecting one’s life might be related to the phase in the life-cycle or the stages of career that participants are going through.

Case 79, 44 years old, manufacturing company

“If you think... there are still 25 years left, so there is nothing to worry about yet”

The notion of ‘dream’ appears in some narratives and is expressed quite vividly. When referring to the main purposes in life, family issues are the most relevant. Participants mention the wellbeing of their families as the major concern in their lives, in which all their efforts are focused on.

9.2.7 Resilience

In the process of analyzing and describing their careers in a retrospective way, some people recount hard experiences and the obstacles they had to cope with. Economic difficulties and family issues are some critical constraints that people have to overcome in order for example, to obtain a university degree or to access to better job positions. At least 28 percent of the interviewees make clear statements indicating resilience.

Case 80, 41 years old, manufacturing company

“... when I was a child I had many economic difficulties, my Mum was divorced and it was hard for her to go ahead with us, so the achievement of my goals meant loads of efforts, leaving the primary school, then the secondary...at the university no one could pay my tuition fees, so I went to live with my grandparents and the university gave me a scholarship and all the possible existing loans and doing tutorials I managed to make it”

9.2.8 Mobility and Change

One specific area that the interview addresses was the participants' attitudes to mobility and career change. When describing the sequences of positions the dialogue tried to search into the meanings that the changes experienced by the individuals had had. Also, in a prospective way the interview tried to search into participants' willingness and perceived capacity to develop different functions within the current employer or in a different company. Perceptions regarding changes in location were also explored.

The attitudes to internal mobility are mostly favourable. Participants stress the options for learning that mobility provides. Even though initial reactions to mobility might not be positive, looking in retrospective respondents perceive that the changes have provided them a sense of self-efficacy that help to undertake new challenges.

Case 72, 41 years old, timber company

“I went through different phases... I was moved and I was quite flexible... now when I look at the past I say ‘what a good thing’, but at that time...mmm...they moved me a lot, one year and a half at the mill, then decorticated, then delivery, afterwards I was a process engineer, then the topic of studies appeared and I had to work in optimization and in some ways the changes were all sudden... now I see it differently but at that time I thought I was going through a shaky ground, they are getting me out of what is mine and why?... well that's why today I incentive the idea of being multi-functional in my team”

Case 86, 44 years old, forestry company

“I would like to have new functions, maybe more responsibility, I know everything we do here, I am not afraid of starting something new”

Regarding functional external flexibility, participants' perceptions do not show as much agreement as those of internal functional flexibility. However, there are some respondents that see themselves successfully working in different functions and contexts.

Case 91, 39 years old, timber company

"I've been very focused on my job... if I don't do health and safety, what am I supposed to do? But now I think you can do whatever you want, even in sales you can earn a lot of money"

Case 93, 45 years old, canning company

"I'm an entrepreneur, I am not afraid of starting from nothing. If somebody asks to work in (an isolated city), as a production manager, I will, if I am going to learn I will, as a personal challenge, I like it, I'm going to learn more, I enjoy learning"

"...If I were offered a job in (name) mining at 5000 meters of height, I would be fascinated, I'm this kind of person, maybe somebody else would like to have a nice office with a nice view and air conditioner and leave at 6 to play golf but I am not this kind of engineer.

The interview searched into attitudes to mobility in location. Five participants make an explicit statement that they do not want to move location. Others express their desire to remain in the same locality however with more flexibility. The samples below inform about this issue:

Case 24, 40 years old, manufacturing company

"I can move to Santiago, but I am not disposed to it, if you had asked me five years ago, I would have gone happy leaving everything behind, but not now... I don't want to leave my children not growing up far away from their grandparents, to take away my wife from her friends, to not being able to get off the plane and breathe fresh air..."

Case 92, 48 years old, manufacturing company

"That company had mills in Chile, Ecuador, Venezuela and the States and that was what attracted me, you can have the chance to go to different places"

For some participants the expectations in their careers have changed since they started working and along the career course. What it was initially expected for themselves changed in terms of purposes in life and career, goals, preferences, meaning of success, among others. In some cases initial expectations or ideas about career success derive in new possible options of development. The notion of internal sense of fulfilling appears integrated in their later scheme of success as in the example below.

Case 24, 40 years old, manufacturing company

(About his future career goals)

“If you had asked me ten years ago I would have said to be in the Fifth Avenue in the World Trade Center... in the 110th floor to get the best sight of New York... but not now...this doesn't mean to be in the top of the world...I have got the conclusion that one has to be what you want to... what you have to do is to search for happiness... that is, to feel fulfilled as a professional and as a person”

Routine and non-routine are themes widely mentioned in career stories. Seven of the interviewees made explicit references to the lack of challenge in their current jobs.

Case 93, 45 years old, canning company

“I could say that after three years this job has become a routine for me, the main problems are already resolved, so what comes next? Just to keep things”

“If you reach the point when you are annoyed doing the same things you loose the sight, when you are bored you loose the interest, no longer go everyday to the mill, no more, and you loose the enjoyment”

“I feel like I already did what I had to...”

An example of the qualitative analysis in the sample of interviewees who showed a career path I (one employer, multiple functions) is presented in the annexe VIII.2

9.2.9 Networking

Interviewees make reference to social connections, especially when looking for new job opportunities. The perception that contacts are the best way to find a job and to

access to better positions when the internal labour market is complex seems to be generalized. Some interviewees recognise the importance of building relationships, but they differ in their approaches to it.

Case 72, 42 years old, timber company

(Talking about a new position he accessed in the past)

“You start relating to other kind of people, with those who take the decisions, so today I can say that a lot of people know me in (the company), this has been very useful for me, and I think I have made the most of it”

Since some sectors are quite concentrated this fact is perceived as an opportunity and also as a risk. Concentration of the industry gives chance to develop acquaintances but at the same time can reduce the opportunities to be reemployed in case of difficulties. Both orientations are depicted below:

Case 71, 45 years old, sawmill

“You have friends, so I say ‘hey I’m not in a job’, and then, the phone, Tuesday and Thursday are the days I bother people... this sector works like this, contacts really work, from all the jobs I’ve had only one I got it from the paper, all the rest are connections, contacts are the sign that tells you where the opportunities are...”

Case 76, 39 years old, sawmill

“The forestry is too limited, in the timber industry in Chile there are two big companies which have all the market, I am in one, the biggest, so what does it happen if I leave the company?... There are no many options left, I would have to work in small firms... so I’ve been thinking to study something else”

Despite that people recognize the importance of networking not all are actively involved in creating or diversifying their networks.

Case 79, 44 years old, manufacturing company

“I am not concerned about developing contacts, there are natural contacts because of the job...I’m not into developing connections but I know that people

know me... I used to work in the area of safety, delivering of toxic substances, codes of behaviour...so I was in contact with people from (a chemist) industrial association) and people know me from there”

Case 86, 44 years old, forestry company

“Now I know much more people than before, it is because of the people I knew from my time in sales. Also, from courses I took, they are contacts you never lose and they are key people, because they know how you work”

There are some divergent opinions about the importance of connections and cooperation within the industry as in the example below.

Case 88, 45 years old, canning factory

“I used to rely on external people, not now, let’s say that now I rely on myself, with my own people and I’m very close with my knowledge, I don’t allow anyone to enter to the mill, if someone comes to see, NO!, it costed me a lot to make it, when I was alone nobody helped me, this has been a product of trial and error”

When searching into the participants’ groups of reference, individuals tend to refer to people within the organisation in the same hierarchical level and the members in their team works. Some interviewees refer to institutions that represent collective interests of the industries or sector they are in, such as chemical grouping or association of industrial fisheries. However, it seems that these organisations do not provide an important group of reference.

Participants do not make clear reference to professional groups, even in the cases who have specialized functions. Besides, there is no evidence of the participation in professional communities.

9.2.10 Age concerns

Interviewees made reference of age and how it can affect their future career prospects. There is a well founded perception that the chances to be reemployed decrease with age and this mean a concern for some people.

Case 37, 50 years old, textile company

“Where am I going? I am not going anywhere because of my age, I am 50”

Case 86, 44 years old, forestry company

“Because of my age it is difficult to change a job, before 40 is feasible, after 40 it isn’t”

9.2.11 Other areas explored: Attitudes to self-employment

Attitudes to self-employment were explored and cannot be considered as themes that spontaneously appear in participants’ accounts. However, attitudes and experiences as independent workers add useful information regarding career identity and future projects.

From the interviewees, 20 percent (five out of 25) have had a personal business at some point in their work lives. Two participants are, at the moment, developing extra activities along their employment. Four from the 25 interviewees have worked as contractors and three of them have worked as self-contractors.

Among the reasons participants mentioned for work as self-employed in the past are: experiencing difficulties to find a job after graduating, fear of becoming redundant, being fired, the result of an encounter of an attractive business opportunity that eventually would provide extra income and as a way to develop own professional interests.

Amongst the interviewees 11 out of 25 (44 percent) show positive attitudes to self-employment and 10 of them include the option to work as independent in the long term.

In opposition, 6 out of 25 state explicitly that they are not interested in working as independent and among the reasons mentioned are the lack of stability and economic security, not having the competencies to do it such as risk taking or ambition, and the high demands that the self-employed encounter.

Case 01, 39 years old, fishing company

“I don’t see myself working as independent.... It’s because how I work, I need a place to be, where I can get goals, where I feel comfortable... in a company going just once a week, where nobody cares about me, which only hired me because of the law... I wouldn’t feel comfortable”.

Case 38, 46 years old, textile company

“I’m not good at that, I don’t have the character, for example, to be independent you need to be ‘hard face’ and for me it is difficult to be like that, if I had it would do it, but always being honest, without double standards... I couldn’t work for example on sales”

9.3 Overview

After analyzing the major themes that emerge in the career accounts collected, the preliminary results point out that the description of career is dominated by themes of advancement and development associated to progression in the organisational ladder emphasizing external criteria of success.

There is a clear emphasis on values of progression, order and control. Issues of stability, money and job security are also present and respondents show a variety of perceptions regarding these topics.

Workers stress the role of ‘breadwinner’ and economic security is perceived as important since the sustenance role is considered as a male responsibility.

Learning has a relevant role when respondents describe their careers and it provides a sense of satisfaction and fulfilment.

Networking is also highlighted. Relationships and social connection are one of the main sources to find a job in the group of interviewees and also provide new opportunities, not only in the external labour market but also within the company. Some respondents stress the fact that being promoted or being offered a new position is due to that “those who take the decisions, knew me”. Issues of marketability arise “now I have learnt that after doing anything you have to show it, so after an achievement, I prepare a short presentation for Monday’s meetings and then claps...well done” .

New approaches of career encompass a more flexible and idiosyncratic career course, insisting on their uniqueness for each individual. In the stories collected there is some evidence of the current rhetoric of individuality, agency and the self-management of careers. Accordingly, some respondents, however a reduced number, give account of this rhetoric and some of them mention the notion of absence of boundaries in careers.

Themes described before are integrated into more inclusive categories and translated into a dimensional spectrum in the form of polarities representing two orientations among which careers accounts can be described.

Even though the themes are connected they provide an integrative way to understand how respondents make sense of their careers.

The polarities identified are:

1. Organisational career v/s boundaryless career or protean careers
2. Agency v/s Communion

3. Continuity v/s Discontinuity
4. Serendipity v/s Planning
5. High career salience v/s Low career salience

A brief description of each of them follows:

1. Organisational career v/s boundaryless career and protean careers

This polarity reflects the general participants' perceptions of careers as linear paths of upgrading moves in one setting or as an idiosyncratic course of multiple paths in different companies. The information and main themes grouped in this dimension consider career path, high and low points in career, account of mobility, reasons of job change, attitudes to self-employment, functional external flexibility, needs for stability, security and attitudes to mobility among others.

The notion of protean careers stresses the psychological success through learning and sense of fulfilment rather than external criteria. Careers are understood as processes of acquisition of knowledge and competencies. The aspect that characterises the career course is the progressive and continuous development of new abilities that allow individuals to act with greater capacities in contexts of increased complexity. Learning is the motif that directs career behaviour and career decisions are based on the search of creativity, novelty, challenge and variety in terms of competency development.

2. Agency v/s Communion

Themes identified can be described in terms of the agency and communion modalities. Agency comprises themes that stress orientation to goals and search of control and power over the environment and the self. Careers are understood as

advancement and upward progression in terms of responsibilities, status, power and achievement. Categories and themes included in this dimension are: achievement/responsibility, status/victory, resilience, self-management of career, serendipity among others.

Unlike agency that stresses control and self-assertion, communion refers to acceptance and personal adjustment. Careers dominated by communion accommodate to changes and unexpected events and envision future possibilities without a strict planning or prefixed stages.

When describing the career course, people with a communion orientation also refer to a wider context that includes other relationships influencing their career and seem to be less career driven. Themes of self-knowledge, self-awareness or self-mastery appear.

It is important to note that due to the nature of the inquiry, interviewees tend to stress facts related to agentic attitudes such as accomplishments or experiences of success. However, it does not necessarily reflect an agentic modality along the whole career life. Individuals can emphasise achievements in their careers but they are not as a product of an agentic strategy to deal with the environment.

3. Continuity v/s discontinuity

This dimension reflects the perception of continuity and predictability along the career course as opposed to uncertainty, unpredictability or surprise. Careers can be understood as changes with peaks and valleys or as a course of fixed stages. Movements can go through organisational hierarchy, roles, functions and locations (in terms of companies and sectors), but the main point in this dimension is the perception of changes as following a predicted trend or as unexpected events. The basic notion in this latter view is the career as exploration, diversity, variety and mobility. Themes informing this polarity are turning points, changes in career expectations, self-awareness and possible selves among others.

4. Serendipity v/s Planning

This polarity informs about the personal disposition towards the future in terms of lack of control over the circumstances as opposed to planning, foreseen possibilities or goal oriented behaviours. Contents of goals, dreams and possible selves are also included.

Career management involves anticipatory behaviour and some respondents show a clear attitude oriented to prepare themselves for the future in terms of both career and general aspects in life.

5. High career salience v/s Low career salience

This category points out the relative emphasis and primacy of the career in comparison to other aspects of life. Careers can be salient in individual's life and to be as one of the main focuses on the personal activities and efforts. Themes descriptive of this dimension are family issues, out of work activities and life-work balance.

After the analysis presented above, the first research question can be answered. It refers to the major themes that emerge from managers' career narratives and the extent to which themes of agency and communion appear in the career stories. Notions of development, advancement, upgrading, social recognition and learning are among the main themes that characterise the stories collected. Content of agency in terms of action, control over the environment and victory are present, and also there is a communion orientation among the interviewees that emphasise acceptance and adaptation.

The analysis of the themes along the career stories indicates the nature of career meanings. The interplay between life experiences, career history, attitudes and meanings of career is seen as shaping future career behaviours and influencing employability.

9.4 Career meanings and the managerial career script

Having already presented the major themes that emerge from the career accounts collected, it is useful at this point to address the role of social institutions in the process of shaping careers. This section is an attempt to delineate the interplay between institutions and individuals' roles in career and career identity configuration. The main aim is to understand to what extent career behaviour is characteristic of social settings and, at the same time, how action can lead to the emergence of new institutions. For this purpose, the model of Barley (1989) on career scripts provides an useful framework. Thereafter, the place of narratives in this polarity is presented.

Different authors have stressed the social nature of careers. Barley (1989) states that careers are properties of collective and even though they are experienced by individuals, they are not only of the individual making. Career lines get to exist after a number of individuals have followed the same path and the paths become institutionalized. The author adds that careers are 'offered individuals at any point in time by the collectives to which they belonged' (Barley, 1989, p.51). Reference groups are those that inform people which career paths are available and how to judge them. Since individual's groups of reference provide the models of career paths available, there are these roles that, at the same time, provide individuals with their identity (Stryker, 1987). Moreover, as Duberly et al. (2006) pointed even though individuals can add singularities into their careers, they risk not to be recognized as having a determined career threatening their identities.

An opposed position is the one held by more psychologically oriented career theories (Hall, 1986), in which the individual is seen as a 'sculptor rather than as a sculpture'

(Bell and Staw, 1989) or people as active agents in shaping their work environment and career opportunities.

These views of career as an individual product or socially influenced are informed in the notion of career scripts (Barley, 1989). Barley (1989) defines scripts as 'interpretive schemes, resources and norms' that 'encode contextually appropriate behaviour and perceptions' (p.53). In the career context, these scripts or career scripts are the interpretive schemes by which people fashion their careers. So collective meanings of career can be considered as the scripts, socially provided, that are enacted by the individuals and are the means by which individuals fashion their careers (Barley, 1989).

Scripts allow understanding the relationship between the meanings of careers and the relative influence of individuals, institutions and society in the process of shaping careers. The traditional career script was led by 'culturally supplied' elements (Martin and Wajman, 2004) that are represented by the organisation. Thus, organisation's norms, values and goals are internalized by the individuals becoming an essential part of their identity.

However, nowadays, with the break down of this 'traditional agreement', the role of organisations as a relevant component of personal identities is in risk. As Martin and Wajman (2004) suggest, in a globalised world local settings represented by organisations and close communities no longer provide individuals with a sense of place.

This view agrees with the one held by Giddens (1991) of the 'reflexive modernization' in which identity becomes a self-project that individuals have to shape and that operates in a wider context than the organisations. What these authors stress is that modernity freed individuals from their close environment and thus organisations or other groups are no longer the main referent for individuals' work identities.

While individuals enact social career scripts, the scripts also reinforce the existence of the institutions that create them, 'institutions constitute and are constituted by the actions of individuals living their daily lives' (Barley, 1989, p. 52). Thus, career scripts provide resources that conciliate the notion of careers as socially provided as well as the individual agency in keeping or changing career scripts. Managerial careers can be seen as career scripts that are 'encoded' (Barley, 1989) in social institutions like organisations, professional groups, family among others, but also, people enacting managerial careers revise, replicate or change them. As Barley and Tolbert (1997) point out, individuals, however constrained, may act according to alternative visions of what social life should be like.

This research explores what the dominant Chilean managers' narratives are and whether there is a widely shared career script supplied by the culture (represented by the organisations) or on the other hand, individuals are active agents that construct identities that transcend traditional notions.

Since career scripts provide the roles individuals occupy, they also provide individual's identity (Stryker, 1987). Associated to the managerial career script there is a particular managerial identity that is ascribed or people ascribe to themselves.

The notion of script is in accordance with the conception of narrative construction of identity as multiple and relational (Gergen, 1991; Markus and Wurf, 1987). Through narratives people construct their own identities but from the sources collectively provided. Narrative accounts of identity are social products, but at the time individuals narrate their identities, they shape them.

Moreover, in the narrative configuration of identity, individuals are not seen as having a fixed, substantial identity composed by a set of stable characteristics but an identity that is multiple and always in progress. Narratives are seen as resources in solving the controversy of continuity and change in identity and the conciliation of structure and agency (Duberley et al. 2006).

9.4.1 Managerial career script

Managerial careers can be considered as career scripts, an institutionalized career form, a public narrative (Sommers, 1994) from which people draw their identities. Derived from the current findings, two career scripts are identified. The dominant narrative is the one supplied by the organisation, which values notions of loyalty and commitment and doing so managers do not distance themselves from the companies they belong to. This dominant script is characterised by values of control, power and search for recognition as the main criteria of success and people engage in behaviours that lead to higher power, responsibility and status.

There is another group with a more personal view of career success that transcends the classical notion of search for status. The organisational career script sees careers as progressive developments into fixed stages, generally associated to movements of increased power and status, however, the emergent career script sees the events in career as not following any predictable route and full of chances or surprises that can change any originally predicted direction.

Even though the dominant vision of desired career, the common strategies people use rely more on happenstance and the natural development of careers, rather than on a more active approach. Activities such as planning, anticipating, foreseeing and preparing for future options are present but an important share of the interviewees opt for more dependent attitudes relying on the opportunities that are offered to them instead of an active search.

In sum, the traditional script of managerial careers has been clearly internalised by the participants and it has been used as a framework in the development of their careers. However, a new narrative is emerging, one that highlights an open labour market and in which individuals can locate themselves in a wider context, independent from companies and industries.

Career identity is configured from the career scripts available. The managerial career script described previously provides individuals with a notion (more or less known and shared) of what being a manager means. Individuals tend to adopt those scripts in order to be recognized as a member of that collective. The notion of being a manager, collectively shared, stresses factors such as power, control, success, and so on. Workers emphasise the role of 'breadwinner' and economic security is perceived as important. Even though some of them are in dual-career couples, the sustenance role is considered as a male responsibility.

Work is a space of great significance in male identity formation and there is agreement that men value being good workers as a means to build up a positive self image as well as to reinforce their roles of the main providers in the family.

The process of development of male career identity is represented in the stories collected. Some facts in the career prompt important processes of self-development and personal growth. In other cases it is a questioning and revision of previous experiences that elicits some changes. In both cases they are experienced as highly important and revealing. These findings in some way confirm the proposal of Levinson (1978) regarding the relevance of the self and the reappraisal that people undertake at midlife.

In the process of enacting a typical managerial career, people reinforce it. For example, workers who considered careers as organisationally based expect and rely on organisational practices (such as an organisational career development system) to access to higher positions in the career ladder in opposition to leading their own development. Instead there is another group who tend to rely more on themselves in the search of opportunities and career prospects and focus their advancement in terms of learning instead to upgrading.

Cases below illustrate opposite orientations in managerial career scripts.

Case 89, 39 years old, fishing company

“I was in this position for about four years and they said to me that I had to go to the store room and I went...that was the time when I knew my boss trusted me. Afterwards, he said ‘I want you to stay in the store room’. There was a bad management in the area and I refused to go there, incredibly I refused it, there was a lot of money, but I wanted to continue in my job”

“The one who was my boss left the company and the fishery had no manager in supplies... there was a recruitment process and a long parade of people came to be interviewed... after three months no one came and I asked ‘when is my boss is coming?... it wasn’t in my mind to apply and one day my boss looked at me and said ‘are you able to take this job?’

(Had you thought about that possibility?)

No, incredibly I hadn’t. At that time I had no ambitions. I was waiting for a boss to come... after years I realise that it was a sort of irresponsibility from my side, I didn’t have any ambitions to achieve something more in my life”

(After 14 years in the same job)

“When you enter to a bank you know that you can have a career, you know that you are going to start as a bank teller but after a while you can be a boss, if it is a small branch you will be the manager with changes in your salary, status and you feel good because you are acknowledged. The State Bank keeps their workers until they retire, also you have opportunities, you see how people go in and then they grow. Even though they start with low wages, they can end earning a lot of money. At the same time, there are lots of benefits...”

“People work to feel good... and give to the family... education for the children, a nice house, a car, to have economic stability...but when you see that you have a high degree and your CV is so good that they put it aside because you know more than them... ‘He has too much training, we need one with less training’... the more training you have the worse”

“We stay here because we need the job... it isn’t because they want to stay here...if you ask them...If you ask me: Hey would you leave for better conditions? Even for hundred pesos more? I think the majority of them would leave”

Case 80, 41 years old, chemical company

“In this company, because we are so few...it is a quite dynamic company, you have to do all, managing people, environment, operations of the mill, production, managing the whole area, results, financial results, so it is almost all”

“We have been said that career development doesn’t exist here. Actually, the organisation is quite flat so it doesn’t make any sense. However, the organisation offers us training, what they try to encourage is the concept of employability. They have prepared me to do my job in a better way, to be able to manage more responsibilities in a wider area within the organisation... but also, we can say ‘this isn’t enough for me’ and look outside”

“There are many expectations for everyone, not in the sense to get new positions. I don’t look for a new job, what I look for is to make more dynamic my current job, new challenges, to get good results in new areas, new things to do, to start all over again but doing different things”

(About the possibility of looking for another job)

“I’m not closed to the option... if someone come and offers me... I see and assess the situation... I’m not going to move for few pesos... if the job is interesting in terms of projections, development, if it is a dynamic job I could think to take it, I am open to the opportunities but currently I am not looking for them”

“I’m not afraid of not having a job, I know that I am able to overcome adversity, I’ve already done it, why wouldn’t I do it again? If it’s not here, it will be somewhere else”

(Talking about other activities)

“I’ve received training as a fireman in USA and Europe, with specialization in relevant areas, so I’m frequently asked for consultancy in the topic, but I haven’t done it for a long time I don’t do it. In (a company) I created all the emergency plans, the same in (another company), but now I don’t have enough time. This is my plan B, people know me in that area, as I told you I have received training, I’ve participated in seminars, I’ve transferred my knowledge and I’ve become popular”

The first excerpt can be seen as representing the traditional career, which values the condition of lifelong job security and the role of the organisations in managing individuals’ careers. As opposed, the second example, stresses notions of flexibility, mobility and independence in the labour market and recognize the importance of the individual’s role in shaping careers.

This new notion of career makes a clear statement in favour of the importance of employability and the role of the individuals in keeping themselves employable. So, in this sense meanings associated to the new career are seen as antecedents, in the cognitive realm, of the behaviours leading to employability.

Chapter X

Qualitative Analysis and Results

Career Identity

In the previous chapter, careers meanings were analysed. The second focus of this research is career identity. A preliminary configuration of the concept was already proposed based on some theoretical proposals and empirical evidence. In this section the components of career identity, as well as the relational aspects of the self-concept, represented in membership to social groups, are explored.

Thereafter, in an attempt to develop a more holistic analysis of the stories as wholes, the evolution of themes along the career is analysed as well as the general forms narratives take. Finally a typology of career stories is proposed.

10.1 Self- definition in the career context

The way people define themselves in the work domain is the core component of the career identity concept. When individuals are confronted with the question of their self-definition in the career context, answers show a wide array of forms. Some people make reference of traits and the driving forces that guide their choices, others refer to their professional roles or emphasise the self-defining roles provided by companies and sectors they belong to.

The differential focus of the answers participants gave when asked about how they define/introduce themselves as workers is depicted in the following samples:

Case 60, 50 years old, manufacturing company

“I define myself as a performer, an innovator, an ethical man, honest, a workaholic. I am paternalist, I am very paternalistic with people... serviceable no matter to whom, if I have to serve to the junior I will, I am a helper, I like teaching...”

In the case above the respondent focuses his definition in a detailed group of personal characteristics, with no reference to any particular membership.

Some of the interviewees define themselves in a quite restrictive way and others give an extended account of roles, skills and a wide range of characteristics.

Case 38, 46 years old, textile company

“If I present myself as an instrumentist is quite vague... so I present myself as a professional from the technical area and automatic control”

Case 87, 43 years old, manufacturing company

“How can I define myself?...mmh, I am someone who gives solutions from the engineer’s point of view. If someone has a problem I can help regarding my expertise which encompasses quite a wide range that includes processes, what I learned at the University, management that I was taught in the MBA, I have all that... safety and an environment that nobody teaches you... so there are lots of things, a wide range of choices that I can offer to someone who wants to employ me”

Respondents faced some difficulties when trying to define themselves as in the case below:

Case 41, 43 years old, textile company

(How do you define yourself from the professional point of view?) “(Laughs) Good question...actually I should be like a.... mmhh... I should be like a technician.... but now you can see why it is difficult to find a job outside, because it is difficult even to define yourself... within the organisation you do everything, wherever I want to work here or wherever I was offered a position in this company I would do it without any difficulty, however outside the door, because of this lack of definition, it is more complicated”

The complexity of identities in the work role is shown in some samples. Participants listed a diversity of roles they have held to satisfy organisational demands.

Case 79, 44 years old, manufacturing company

“My role is everything... I am able to unfold myself and perform different roles, it’s been a constant in my work here, I remember that in one of my first positions someone told me ‘you are trying to wear seven hats at the same time’... but, that’s

the way we work here, we are used to be a poor circus, do you know what it means? You have to do everything... I have had different experiences, I am from production line, I've managed contracts for up to 5-6 millions dollars, I've negotiated with the union and managed a group of 60 people, usually the most complex, all unionized...and also technical projects, training, quality assurance, safety... I've covered almost all"

10.2 Social Identification

Modern views of identity highlight its relational perspective (Baumeister, 1986). Identity is socially situated according to the way people position themselves in relation to others (Sedikides and Brewer, 2001).

The concept of career identity can be expanded in terms of the multiple spaces and relationships individuals are immersed in. Through processes of identification individuals acquire some qualities derived from the groups they belong to. These contexts take a variety of forms from family to larger social groups such as organisations, departments, managerial and professional groups among others.

In search of understanding career identity, the relationship between individuals and groups and the identification processes associated are explored below.

a. Professional identification

Participants perceive profession as a fundamental part of their career identity. One of the most frequent ways individuals use to introduce themselves is their professional title, even more in those whose degree is widely recognizable and it is perceived as prestigious. Among them the label of 'engineer' is frequently referred.

Case 90, 48 years old, manufacturing company

"This is intellectually challenging, it forces you to be an engineer. First of all, I am an engineer"

Case 71, 45 years old, moulding factory

(Talking about his higher points) “There it is deposited the ingenious for what I was taught to... To be an engineer means to develop your ingenious”

Some participants make explicit reference to their own specialities in the engineer field, such as chemical engineer, engineer in health and safety or fishing engineer. On the other hand, some of them point out that their original specialities are blurred and that they have never worked in their specific field.

b. Role Identification

Some interviewees refer to themselves as ‘managers’ and base their identities on this role. For some of them the condition of being ‘the boss’ or ‘manager’ seems to be quite informative and one of the most descriptive ways to present themselves.

Case 71, 45 years old, sawmill

“I’ve always been in the industry, industrial manufacturing, either plastic or moulding is always industrial manufacturing... as a manager, in production”

c. Functional identification

Identification with a functional area is found in the career stories collected. Individuals define themselves in terms of the characteristic of their functions (e.g. the pace, dynamism, leading role and so on).

The case in the examples above expresses his preferences for operations/production area

“Operations is the central axis of the system, all the rest are services...stocks, supply...just facilitate the operation performance, but it is operations where the

decisions are, what leads, what sets the pace, so as long as you are in operations you are in the advanced group”

(He sees himself) “In industrial production... there is where my experience is, my knowledge is, the years are... I don’t see myself in services... I can hardly see myself working in services”

d. Organisational identification

Commonly mentioned by the respondents, it is the sense of belonging to their companies and the perception of shared characteristics.

The excerpt below depicts organisational and sectoral identification in the case 71

“When you come to a company that is the world’s leader it what does, there is no doubt that it is a good place to stay, of course, it has backup, a tremendous stability, enormous...”

e. Identification with the sector

Identification with sectors shows higher variability than those mentioned previously. For some interviewees there is a close sense of familiarity with a particular sector, for others instead there is no special attachment and they value options to diversify their work experiences.

The examples below show cases of high and low degrees of identification with a sector.

Case 27, 42 years old, fishing company

“If I were unemployed, I would go to knock doors... (Where?) In the fishing sector... I would come back to my habitat, the place where I feel comfortable... when you are taken out from where you come from, you feel insecure...”

Case 01, 39 years old, fishing company

“I feel that I have always coped well with the challenges I’ve had to face... I came here without knowing anything about fishery and before I had been working in

mines, pulp mills, hydroelectric companies and so on...so I am not worried that I won't be able to do something different or that I will miss the fishery"

10.3 Relative salience of identities

Multiple identities come into play at work. People might identify with professions, organisations or other groups, with all of them or none. Understanding the interaction of different identities is seen as useful in the comprehension of career behaviour. There have been different proposals regarding the relative salience of multiple identities. Social Identity Theory suggests that factors such as the distinctiveness of the group (Mael and Ashforth, 1992), the prestige of the group and the salience of out-groups (Ashforth and Mael, 1989) increase the tendency to identify with groups. Identity Theory (Stryker, 1985) indicates that the relative salience of identities is dependent on the extent to which a particular identity is invoked. Identity salience is the likelihood that the identity will be invoked in diverse situations.

Proximity of the group has been considered when analysing the salience of the identity attached to it. Scholars postulate that lower order identities (i.e. work groups) are more subjectively important to people than higher order identities (e.i. organisations) and people tend to identify more with proximal groups (workgroups) than with distal ones (organisations) (Ashforth and Johnson, 2001).

Information from the stories collected suggests that a diversity of identities can coexist simultaneously. For instance, people can identify with their professions, functions, roles and organisations (see case 71 above) or can show a more idiosyncratic pattern of identification as in the case below.

Case 24, 40 years old, manufacturing company

"I know that I've the structure of an engineer, the mind... but... I don't know if I am an industrial engineer... I don't match the stereotype...no...no... I'm much more liberal...it's weird but... because all I've gone through, my thinking and so on...I feel closer to the humanities, the soft area, all of this stuff, I feel there is something to get from there, an area to develop"

“If I had to choose something it could be retail, the commercial area... it isn't too hard...and at the same time, there is always something to sell!!!”

(About the possibility of working in operations) “No, I would die... it isn't that I cannot do it...it's just that I feel... you don't have more than this type of interaction... I feel that I need to strengthen myself through the interaction with others”

“I would like to work managing the (a charity for the elderly)...we have to give back to the elderly all they did for us and basically because I really enjoy talking to them!”

“...It could be from an aeronautical company to a bananas plantation... it doesn't matter where... for me the kind of job doesn't mean anything, any job dignifies the person, it is a job and the real difference is how well you do it...it is what you can do, do the job well, look for creative solutions, look for new niches, get lower costs, involve others, it could be whatever area, where I feel I can be useful”

This case depicts the sense of independence from the company and sector and his identity seems to be closer to the functional area and the job he is currently performing.

When analysing the group of reference or the groups participants are actively involved with, the most mentioned are colleagues and team members, and in a minor extent, professional groups or industrial associations. This finding could support the notion that proximal groups tend to prompt more identification than distal groups (Ashforth and Johnson, 2001).

In accordance with notions of multiple identities (Markus and Wurf, 1987) and subidentities (Hall, 1986), Ashforth and Mael (1989) based on SIT also suggest that identity is an ‘amalgam of loosely coupled identities’ (p.30), and individuals can slide from one identity to another.

Personal identities are also considered in the interplay of multiple identities. Interviewees show differences regarding the salience of work identity compared to personal identity as it is seen in the example below.

“(Talking about a past event) ... It was an issue in my life outside work, I have the characteristic... I don’t know if it is a good one... I have the ability to separate myself from my work, I work from 8 to 5 and at home I don’t even talk about my job”

(When he was transferred to another position) “At first, I didn’t take it in a good mood...but I said to myself, I am paid for working, I don’t need to enjoy my job, I have to do it and I have to do it well...”

(Have you ever had some other job together with your current employment?) “No, I have had some offers, but I work to live and I don’t live to work.”

The previous example depicts a sort of independence between work and personal identities, suggesting that they can operate independently. However, it could be predicted that a more integrated identity might provide a richer perspective, for example in the process of taking decisions or solving problems.

This issue has been addressed in the context of work and career and some authors have highlighted the advantages of ‘holistic identities’ that are those in which diversity of identities are integrated (Ashforth and Johnson, 2001) and the potential disadvantages when individuals compartmentalize identities, fail to integrate them and do not recognize the lessons inherent when acting different identities (Ashforth and Mael, 1989).

10.4 Overview

When defining themselves, respondents refer to a variety of elements including traits, abilities, drivers as well as professions and occupations. Companies and sectors individuals belong to are also mentioned. The self-definitions take a variety of forms and differ in terms of their complexity and richness.

When identity is understood in relational terms or how someone positions himself in relation to others, reference to professions, functional fields, organisations and sectors appeared.

The notion of profession, especially being an 'engineer' and its characteristics of creativity and versatility to solve problems, are highlighted in participants' career accounts. Professionalism is stressed in occupations that are more specialized and/or developed in a specific area such as engineer in health and safety and fishing engineer.

In addition, managerial roles and the responsibilities involved are utilized as descriptive of the self. In accordance, Identity Theory (Stryker, 1987) sees the self as consisting of role identities or the identities that come from the positions people occupy in society, so as long as people assume managerial roles and have the opportunity to enact those roles, this leads to role identification.

Regarding organisational identification, participants express their closeness to their companies. In the career accounts there are frequent positive references to the companies in terms of prestige, competitiveness, solvency and opportunities for development. Since participants are all managers it could be expected that organisational identification is also related to the increase in responsibilities and status within the organisation as well as the chance for the managers to enact organisational values and to represent the organisation in external contexts (such as clients, suppliers, professional audiences, among others).

When participants were asked to identify their groups of reference they mentioned their peers within the company and the people who started at the company at the same time they did. This might inform about the relative salience among identities.

In accordance with the notion of multiple identities, the accounts collected indicate that different sub-identities can exist simultaneously (for example being a technical expert and also a team leader) or be in conflict. The relative salience of each sub-

identity might be dependent on the particularities of the situation, thus in some situations it is more appropriate to act as a technician and in others as a team leader. Participants give account of these demands when expressing 'it is necessary to wear different hats'.

The degree of identification with a group seems to inform the degree of attachment, someone's intentions to undertake career change and where the search for new options is focused on. Participants who refer positively to their companies expect to remain in it and those who express attachment to their sectors also expect to be reemployed in the same industry in case of being fired.

10.5 Career Identity formation and evolution

Career narratives allow to access to the biographical trajectories of individuals, so in order to understand how career identity is shaped, identity changes along the career are analysed. In an attempt to extend previous analysis, a sequence of three periods in identity formation is described. Thus, the main features in the beginning, turnings points and future in trajectories are expected to provide information about the process by which career identity and identification are forged and serve as a framework for comparison across stories.

10.5.1 The beginning

In the process of career identity formation the choice of occupation plays an important role. It can be rooted in participants' biographies since participants tend to refer to their families of origin and early memories in narrating their career choice. For some of them it was a predicted decision, for others quite serendipitous or a result of constraints and external demands. In any case, people start configuring their work identities with the occupational choices they make.

Family and significant others influence work identities and career trajectories. Later on, aspects such as financial responsibilities, marital status and children affect career course.

Career choices are influenced not only by the close social environment but also they are affected by and inform the values and the social and historical contexts this group encounters. As an example, even though the respondents work in primary and secondary industries, contexts that are traditionally male dominated, their professions also can be considered as typically masculine (e.g. engineering, management or accountancy).

Profession has an important place when people introduce themselves and it is one of the main components when participants begin their career accounts. Individuals

emphasise their interests in pursuing careers in their area of expertise and their attempts to go back to their field if they are out of it.

Case 50, 44 years old, manufacturing company

(Describing his first work experience)

“I went to work as a manager in suppliers, I was in charge of buying all the computers and spare parts but I didn’t decide what to buy or not, I only did the paperwork... so I said to myself ‘being a student for 6 to 7 years and now am I doing paperwork?... studying engineering to do this?’ I didn’t study engineering to do this, I studied engineering because I liked it, it was a sacrifice for me, my family and to end up doing a job that could be done by an accountant... I didn’t want to be a business engineer or and accountant”

The profession appears more relevant at early stages in the career which might be related to the socialization process at the university, a period in which identity is configured and reinforced in close relationship to profession.

Respondents show higher mobility at the beginnings of their careers, so it could be suggested that professions tend to keep their centrality as a means to maintain continuity in career identity. Thereafter, as soon as individuals settle and change functions, the area of study seems to lose relevance. In fact, research informs that professionalism tends to be lower in groups with over 16 years of tenure compared with groups with lower tenure (Hall et al., 1970).

10.5.2 Career identity trajectories and turning points

Stories collected show evidence of the evolving nature of the self-concept along careers. Career identity is not considered as an achievement of adulthood as it was stated by initial theories of identity development (Erikson, 1950), on the contrary it is a structure in tension, always in process of change and reformation (Mishler, 1999).

Identity changes tend to occur in connection with some abrupt and dramatic turning point in the person’s life (McAdams, 1993; Riessman, 2002b; Ibarra, 2005). A

turning point represents a 'point of no return, after which the protagonist can no longer see or do things the same way' (Ibarra, 2005, p. 29).

The turning points mentioned in the stories collected refer to a variety of events and the meanings individuals ascribe to them. The events that become turning points are from different nature, mainly related to changes in employers, roles, locations or in family life. Others are internally generated such as an awareness or insight. They are often described as a matter of chance and unexpected events that make individuals rethink their current lives.

The following are some examples of turning points

Case 24, 40 years old, manufacture company

"What triggered it was the end of the (name) project...suddenly I came back to my job and I came back home and I realized that the person near me... I only slept with her, but I didn't know her, I had abandoned her for three years, I just saw her on the weekends... when I went home she was sleeping, when I left she was sleeping...she never complained, I knew she wasn't happy, but she never complained... one day she said she wanted to divorce.. I said to myself this situation must change or I have to change...and I did"

Case 79, 44 years old, chemical manufacturing company

"And from one day to another, they offered me this position... to tell you the truth I never thought it would be possible...(Why?) because this position is really appreciated and I thought there were many others, who were here longer and it was more probable that they took the position and not me..."

"... It was such unexpected news like someone tells you that you won the lottery and you haven't bought any number!"

"...It was a really hard time for me, because when you have certain expectations, you prepare yourself, your mind, your mood, you see the position, what needs to be done, what needs not to be done, what you have to change, what you have to keep, but for me it complicated my life because it was completely sudden and unexpected"

Turning points help people to reframe their confusion as meaningful and also to explain the discontinuity in their stories as in both cases above. Also, turning points impact the personal domain. Some facts in the career prompt important processes of

self-development and personal growth. In other cases it is a questioning and revision of previous experiences that elicits some changes. In both cases they are experienced as highly important and revealing. These findings in some way confirm the proposal of Levinson et al., (1978) regarding the relevance of the self and the reappraisal that people undertake at midlife.

The analysis of career course shows no predicted routes, however movements and their objective and subjective dimensions can be organised in some categories. Career stories inform about identity transformations through job transitions, changes between roles, location and so on. What follows is a description of some identity changes along the career course.

10.5.2.1 Identity changes and magnitude of transitions

Being involved in new work experiences or further education alters the job identity and the role identification previously held. Workers tend to adapt and modify their identities in accordance with the roles assumed. This process can be gradual and progressive or abrupt and radical. The examples below show these transformations.

Case 86, 44 years old, forestry company.

(A former chemical analyst who was transferred into an administrative position)

“My major responsibility here is in statistics of production, this is my main contribution... I don't think I would like to go back to the liquids... the white apron, these smelly things... and that kind of job implies night shifts and I don't like them... so if I had to search for a job it would be in the production function, something like a programming, production statistics, managing systems and knowledge”

Case 89, 39 years old, fishing company

“After three years they called me and said that... It was then when they realized that I knew how to do my job... ‘From today your job will change, you are not going to be an assistant anymore, now you are the manager of acquisitions’ and then they said my new salary and I thought ‘oh my God, what am I going to do with all that money? From then my life changed radically, many things changed”

The example above shows how a promotion can alter significantly previous identity. New activities, responsibilities and social relationships configure renewed external and self perceptions.

10.5.2.2 From specialists to managers

One of the most relevant changes in the work self-definition concerns the change from specialist roles to managerial roles. As people progress into their careers the tendency is to move into managerial roles. Some participants experience this role change as a turning point in their careers. It seems to be that managerial roles are experienced as complex tasks that force workers to deal with different and unpredictable kinds of situations. Managing people, dealing with individual differences, taking unpopular decisions are all demanding situations when assuming a managerial position and they play an important role in managers' identities.

Case 79, 44 years old, chemical manufacturing company

(Turning point) "As long as I moved up in the organisation, I left behind the security of the technical knowledge to face something much more volatile such as managing people"

Case 50, 44 years old, manufacture company

(Transition from electrical maintenance manager, to production manager) "...As a production manager I am in charge of 40 people... At first it was a cultural shock, the operators tended to be extremely informal and disorganized (what follows is an extended account of how difficult was to manage this group and he compares them with his previous team of technicians described as more formal and professional). I cannot remember that any electrician had behaved like that"

Case 38, 46 years old, textile company

(Transition from technical role to a managerial role) "There have been some problems, they are all different and three of them are much older than me and one has a strong character"

Participants express the difficulties when assuming managerial roles and the need to focus all their efforts in performing the new role. At least nine participants express vividly the complexities of being a manager and how this experience has shaped their careers to a great extent. It is possible to suggest that when assuming managerial roles they become salient. Pratt (1998) coincidentally proposed that the salience of group identities can be enhanced when the group membership is novel or distinctive.

Stories analysed show that when people assume managerial roles apparently there is a decline in professional identification. Being a manager demands a generalist approach in opposition to the specialized role associated to professions and technical roles.

10.5.2.3 Identity changes due to changes in sector

Transitions from one sector to another triggers identity changes. Participants report that moving to a different sector demands not only new abilities and competencies but also different attitudes and personal styles at work.

Case 60, 50 years old, manufacturing company

After a long account of his 20 years of experience in the fishing sector, he explains how the change into a new position in manufacturing (after his dismissal) transformed the way he has to interact to other people.

“Here in the company I had to change and moderate myself... I was formed in a different style, I used to share with other kind of people... they were... there was another kind of leadership...and I had to change that style”

There are differences in the pattern of transition process when changes are voluntary or involuntary. In involuntary changes individuals are forced to adapt to a new role and the complexity of the adaptation process might be depending on the magnitude of the change (Nicholson and West, 1989; Latack, 1984). At the same time, identity plays an important role in the adjustment and individuals might not be able to adapt to a non desired identity or, expressed otherwise, to a not desired possible self. The following case shows the resistance to become a seller after graduating as a timber engineer.

Case 04, 48 years old, saw mill.

“.... And I was two years out of the timber industry... I did other things...I sold credit cards, around 1985 when there was a boom in the sale of shares... (After being offered a new position in a timber company) It was a better option, much more stable and secure and also closer to the area I work to. (Was it important to come back?) Yes, of course, I didn't feel comfortable selling, I worked... but always (thinking) 'what would they be doing?... I would be doing the same' Always thinking about my profession, I studied that subject because I liked it, I went to study timber industry because I really liked it, not because I didn't have anything to do or I just fell there... no, I always wanted it”

While studying individuals start building their work identities (Mael and Ashforth, 1989). Students acquire the values, attitudes and behaviour expected for a member of a professional group which is also reinforced by the interaction with role models and the membership to related groups or associations, so in many ways they are creating some valued and desired possible selves. This is depicted in the next case of a participant that after studying engineering changed the ways he perceived himself and became in conflict with his then current job and started envisioning new work options. In sum, studying creates a new identity that becomes salient in comparison with previous identities.

Case 89, 39 years old, fishing company

“If someone in this company gets some training the new opportunities are not going to be found here... they will come out from outside... there have been few new opportunities within the company and you just see them... for example I am a business engineer, I could be working in a position... let's say ... but it doesn't work like that, they make decisions in other ways... so you look at this and say...it's ok”

10.5.3 Future Possible Selves

The self-concept encompasses knowledge about the current self and its accomplishments, failures and characteristics and also includes knowledge about what the self might eventually achieve or become. According to the narrative notion of identity development, identity should be considered as a 'work in progress',

something that is never finished. This allows exploring the future possibilities for the self in the career context.

In human development possible selves serve to focus and to direct behaviour towards or away from the expected or feared end-states, so the notion of ‘what I might become’ in the context of career helps to understand individual’s expectations and future career intentions.

Possible selves can be characterized in terms of their salience and degree of elaboration. Salience refers to the extent to which one individual thinks about the possible selves and how clear and easy they are to imagine (King and Raspin, 2004). Elaboration refers to the detail and vividness of the possible self.

What follows are some excerpts of possible selves in work contexts that vary in terms of their salience and elaboration.

Case 24, 42 years old, manufacturing company

“Definitely I would install a Chinese retail, definitely, to sell different kinds of articles. I am convinced that all the major industries in the world will be in China...I would sell whatever you want, from steel articles to dolls... everything... I have thought before about this idea, this is my plan B, I always have an alternative in mind”

Case 27, 41 years old, fishing company

“My next step is... I am already with an APV (a system to save money for retirement) so I want to keep the same salary, not let it decrease, in 17 years forward, at the age of 57 (sic) I could be retired, and that’s my projection... it is not having a house, because I already got it... I have a place in the countryside as well... I would like to make it the most...to build a new house there... if God wills...the place where I am going to spend the rest of my life...if God wills... but I don’t have another wish... if you ask me for another objective, I would say no”

Some participants report possible selves with clear strategies to reach them.

Case 71, 45 years old, moulding company

“Once I proposed to myself different projects to do in the future...it was a question like ‘What am going to do if I have to leave tomorrow?’, then I assessed 3 or 4 projects as a personal challenge, as self-employed and they are there, safely kept. I developed them, evaluated them, asked for quotations...I used my vacations to go to Santiago to see equipments, alternatives. I cannot imagine myself paying taxes to the state, being employed at the age of 70, I see myself... my big dream is to finish my duties as a father and settle in some place, near to a river, with 6 lodges, one computer, a satellite antenna, inviting ‘gringos’ to fish and manage that business... if you ask me what is my future project in life is, it is this”

For some participants possible selves are focused in a sense of fulfilment and personal well being instead of more specific and short term projects.

Case 24, 40 years old, manufacturing company

“I am conscious of only one life and I want to enjoy it and to do things in this life... it is not a matter of leaving a trace., I don’t know... to feel late at night, when I go to bed, that it was a valuable day, I have some breaks during the year, a kind of evaluation, I am convinced that happiness is built day by day and you are the only one who knows how to make yourself happy”

Case 79, 44 year old, manufacturing company

“My ambition is to do a good job and to try to give the most I can to the people that depend on me, it seems like a blurred goal, it is not the typical objective like ‘I want to achieve this position or get this or that’, my ambitions are not in economic terms... I have everything I need... sometimes I feel bad about that and think ‘I should be more ambitious’, but on the other hand, what I am trying to achieve is to identify my weaknesses... this is the area in which I am moving to, not to the outside but the inside”

When the participant was asked what he would do in case of being fired, he answered:

“I have no idea. (Have you thought about that?) I have thought but I haven’t found an answer... I see it as a remote possibility... I haven’t rambled around this issue, I believe that starvation comes out with many more ideas than a hundred of wise men...something is going to come out at that moment, I don’t want to be bothered in advance, there is no point to do it”.

Possible selves also comprise the images one fears becoming. Some undesired possible selves that appear in the narratives are related to unemployment, labour insecurity or work-life balance issues, as it is shown in the sample below.

Case 1, 39 years old, fishing company

“... If I wouldn’t have this kind of life, I still would be there (working as subcontracts)... I moved because of the way of living, I wasn’t able to live that way... and this comes from my family experience. Let me tell you, my father worked his entire life as a subcontractor, going from one place to another, I, as his son, together with my sister, grew up only with my mother, so as a child I always thought that I didn’t want the same for my own children...”

Case 79, 44 years old, chemical manufacturing company

“No, no, I see it in my father, he has a preserved food factory, he is 79 years old... what I see is how demanding it is to as work as a self-employed person... today you have success and tomorrow everything is bad, there is uncertainty, you never know what is going to happen the next day (so, you don’t want to follow his way) No, no, I don’t like it. As self-employed you have the facility that you don’t have any boss, but you don’t have a regular income, on the other side you have the stability and you have a salary, however, you will never be rich”

The role of possible selves in job transitions seems to be influential. Apparently possible selves serve as a cognitive trial for future personal states that help to adapt to new positions. In the next example the difficulties experienced by a manager that is promoted depict the role of possible selves in the adjustment process.

Case 79, 44 years old, chemical manufacturing company

The transition to this job, so unexpected, produced a certain tension for a long time... and I felt like it was too much cumulative stress... I went from a situation in which I was extremely bored to another situation completely new, without being prepared

People who have explored possible selves, and even more who have tried them out, tend to have better experiences when facing similar conditions. It is possible to suggest that previous experiences facilitate the process of adaptation into new but

similar situations. For example the condition of unemployment is perceived differently by those who have had the experience than those who have not.

Case 71, 45 years old, moulding company

“I am convinced that there will be always an alternative for any trouble, the first time I was said ‘you are not going to work for us anymore’ I was quite complicated, twenty years later I can enjoy it and take vacations...”

Case 87, 43 years old, manufacturing company

(About the possibility of being unemployed) “It isn’t something I am worried about, but if it happens...I think...maybe it would be difficult to find a job because I have never looked for a job...even when I left the University...I was doing my Master and I went there to explore and started working...so I never was in a situation of being graduate and not getting any job...I didn’t have that experience so I am a little bit afraid of that... but at the same time I think my wife should help me!”

Developing work activities aside the current employment either currently or in the past serve to delineate future possible selves. Some participants have undertaken activities as self-employed or part time lectures or consultants and these activities are perceived as opportunities for further career development.

Case 86, 44 years old, forestry company

“I’ve always thought that I am going to run my own business, as independent... I don’t know... to have a coffee shop, a book shop... (Would it be a possibility in the long term?) Yes... once we were all shaking because there was the rumour of dismissal...re-structure everywhere and I thought maybe I can install a bakery. It has always been an option in case of not having a job... Also I think I could work in sales... I used to buy and sell gold”

Case 9, 39 years old, forestry company

“With some friends from the University we started to do some small businesses... since we were students, we bought animals, grew them up and then sold them...that gave us some money to go to seminars, had vacations... but one always wants more and last year we decided to create a society, we have now a company of innovation, the idea is to look for new alternatives of businesses... we envisage that our future is going in that way, we want to invest more time and make the business grow...”

Case 93, 45 years old, canning company

“In 1980 I left the University, looked for a job and I didn’t find one...what was I going to do? I couldn’t wait...I met some guys, an architect and an electronic technician who were in the same... so, let’s do something together...and we created a building company and we won variety of proposals that allowed me to earn money to go on studying”

“I have a business of ostriches...and from 2002 to 2004 I produced ostrich’s meat, now I am dedicated to raise up and sell birds and at the same time I am in the distribution of meat... this is parallel to my job... so if I don’t have a job I am going to work harder developing this business... by now the most important thing in the business is that the raising up of the animals is already under control, I’ve even learnt to make a surgery to the ostriches”

“The day I leave this company I know I will be fine anywhere, wherever I go, I’ve been in the operation as well as management and I know both areas perfectly”

People are less willing to initiate activities in unexplored areas or those they perceive unfamiliar.

Case 71, 45 years old, moulding company

(Previously he mentioned he could hardly see himself working on services)
“What happened is that to cross the river you have to leave the border and by now I haven’t left the edge, so I cannot imagine myself crossing the ocean... if I have to do it, I will anyway, I haven’t known anyone who died due to unemployment, I am going to work anyway”

Case 37, 50 years old, textile company

“Where am I going? I am not going anywhere because of my age. I am 50. I think I could work as an independent person, the thing is just to jump into the water... at the beginning you can be drowned...I’ve thought about that, and I even have some machines... my hobby is to make furniture... I think there it will come a time in which I will do it. But for now, since my work experience has been 100 percent as an employee if I found an opportunity of being an employee I would take it”

Case 89, 39 years old, fishing company

We stay here because we all need a job... but it is not because we want to stay here... if you ask us 'would you leave under better conditions, 100 pesos more in your salary? I think the great majority would leave'.

"You can come two years later and ask me 'have your conditions improved?', maybe I will say 'no' or maybe you will ask what happened with me... 'No, he left, he looked for and found a better job'".

"I decided to stay here, thinking that one day it would be better"

As extensions of identity, possible selves also vary in terms of complexity. Possible selves are connected with previous experiences, so it could be suggested that a variety of work experiences increase the options of the self in the future. Individuals that have assumed more roles or have a complex identity translate that complexity in the selves envisioned for the future.

10.5.4 Overview

When analysing career identity the first references interviewees made concern to career choice and in so doing, participants refer to biography and early memories. Career identity evolves along the career course and transitions are marked by events or turning points. Among the experiences that trigger job change are studying, transitions in positions such as promotion, assuming managerial roles, changing sectors and also some personal experiences or internal ones such as sudden awareness or self-appraisal. These events, considered as turning points, are the means people use to explain the discontinuities in their career stories.

Some typical career identity changes can be identified. Some of them are placed within organisational settings, such as the transition from technical to managerial roles.

Work transitions contribute to a variety of work identities. As it has been suggested in the literature, career change is an antecedent of identity change.

Possible selves are the projected self and, in the sample, they take a variety of forms, from being almost absent to elaborated notions of what someone wants or does not want to become. Notions of desired possible selves include to be independent or to have a personal business. Feared possible selves include unemployment or to work in a non-standard employment.

Previous career experiences are included in people's possible selves. It can be suggested that variety of past work experiences is translated into variety of possibilities for the self in the future. From the analysis of the components of career identity as well as the way in which identity evolves along the career it is possible to answer the research question 2.1 regarding the role of possible selves and social identification in the configuration of career identity.

Even though identity has recently received attention in organisational contexts, there is scant information about how career identity can be configured and its components delineated. In the career stories collected the notion of social identification as a central part of career identity is supported. When people are confronted with the question of who you are in the career context, reference to significant social groups appears and they are conformed mainly by work teams, professional groups and the organisation as a whole. Thus, it can be inferred that career identity components are structured in personal, relational and collective terms and doing so career identity resembles identity in general.

This research also argues that narratives provide a useful way to approach career identity, how it is forged and how it evolves through time.

10.6 Narrative analysis and Career Stories

There is agreement that literature from psychology tends to treat the individual as a composite of varied characteristics in an atomised way rather than looking for a sense of a whole and integrity in a person (McAdams, 1993; Riessman, 2002a). What follows is an attempt to organise results from the case-centred analysis based on the analysis of the career accounts as a whole.

To begin, this section presents a holistic analysis of form (Lieblisch et al., 1998) in the dominant themes in the careers analysed. It can be considered a second stage in the analytical process since it tries to address career in its evolving nature. Here the interest is placed on the specific direction taken by the themes along career stories.

Thereafter, the analysis of the story forms of participants' career trajectories is addressed. The stories collected vary in the extent to which the plot of the story moves into the predicted or desired goals of the individual, configuring a particular trajectory. However, some commonalities are found and are presented in this section.

Based on narrative accounts a tentative typology of stories was constructed. Four different career types of stories can be identified in which plots, dominant themes, motifs, elaboration and salience of possible selves, objects of identification and complexity in self-concepts can be differentiated.

10.6.1 Analysis in the evolution of career meanings

There are some patterns in the directions of themes along individuals' career course that can be identified. Thus, in the holistic-content perspective in narrative analysis there are some themes that evolve from the beginning to the end of the career stories.

Some themes remain dominant in the whole career and some others show fluctuations which can be related to career stage and the period in the life cycle, among other variables.

Themes concerned with needs for security and stability are present along the whole career for some participants who evaluate career experiences in terms of the security they have provided. For some interviewees needs for security appear relevant at the beginning or middle of their careers and tend to decrease later. For others instead, it is later on when needs for stability are dominant.

It seems that a sense of work security and stability in careers is an important issue and it tends to be an achievement of those with consolidated careers or workers who have careers professionally oriented that can be independent in the labour market.

Case 89, 39 years old, fishing company

Needs for security

“When I just came I wasn’t too ambitious, until short time ago I just lived my life, all I wanted was to have a stable job and I got it, so I thought by now I just have to keep it”

Case 38, 46 years old, company

Sense of security

“(His employment in the current company) It has been a high point, I am not thinking whether next month I am going to have or not a job, there is a long time since I don’t have these worries....I know I have options here, although in economic terms things aren’t going to be better, there are possibilities in the professional development and that’s important”

Among the themes that appear constantly along the whole individuals’ trajectories are advancement, growth and social recognition. In some stories these themes pervade entire career course, show a steady trajectory and seem to give continuity to individuals’ career. In the example below, the participant at different points of the interview made reference to growth and learning as his main motifs at work.

Case 91, 39 years old, forestry company

“(Telling about his current job) To tell you the truth I have a good fun in this job and it has helped me to grow a lot in professional terms, I’ve been growing permanently”

“I feel like I’ve always been advancing, that’s why I am relaxed and at the same time enjoying what I’m doing”

(When talking about some additional requirements he was asked in his previous employment) “It was OK, those things make me grow a lot”

(About his lower point) “It was a very tough experience but I think I grew, I’ve tried to get the best of it, that experience taught me many things”

(Talking about one experience as a self-contractor) “It was a low point, I went just to comply with my job, I was entertained, the boss’ daughter was my girlfriend and I hung around with the general manager’s son...but to grow or learn something important? I don’t think so, it was just plain, I went there to do nothing”

The analysis of the stories collected indicates that themes related to personal growth, spiritual values and out of work activities associated to generativity (Erikson, 1950) show a specific trajectory and can clearly be differentiated according age groups. Themes such as assisting younger generations, acting as a mentor, participating in religious activities or doing voluntary work tend to appear at later stages of the career.

Moreover, mature workers mention experiences of change in terms of values and meanings of career, for example the transition from an instrumental to a more personal and idiosyncratic view of career success. It seems that men challenge the values they acquired they were young and establish their own set of rules based on their own experiences. This is related to the notion of mature identity (Baumeister, 1986) in which social and cultural views that people have ascribed during life, in later years tend to be appraised in order to define a more personal and resonant set of principles.

Case 71, 45 years old, moulding company

“When people look for satisfaction through their bank accounts, this is not the right place to stay, there are better options outside, so it depends on the values you have... how you weight them: money, personal or spiritual values”

“I am in a stage of life in which my most important project is to give two good children to the society”

Case 4, 48 years old, forestry company

(Talking about his future plans) "I want to retire at 60, not later than that and then I don't want to work, what is really fulfilling for me is my work at the church... before working here I use to participate quite frequently, I belong to some specific groups and I have an important position"

The analysis above provides input in the comprehension of the evolving nature of careers. Themes can show a steady relevance or change along the career course and these changes seem to be in relationship with the work and life cycles or particular events in individuals' lives. More importantly, themes in career inform about the meanings individuals ascribe to career and these meanings are connected to a particular career behaviour and thus to employability.

10.6.2 Narrative forms in career

The analysis of the career stories as a whole can be directed towards their meaning and their evolution along the story as in the analysis above, and also, towards the form that stories take in terms of the individuals' perceptions and progression towards personal goals.

Different authors have described the characteristics of a well-formed narrative.

McAdams (1993), for example, mentions at least six standards of good life-story form: coherence, openness, credibility, differentiation, reconciliation and generative integration.

Gergen and Gergen (1988) realized that a common feature of the narratives is the progression towards a given point or goal state. The authors assert that any narrative has an end point and the different events that lead to it can be translated into a linear form that represents the event's value towards the end-point. At the most basic level, Gergen and Gergen (1988) identify three types of narrative form: the stability narrative, in which different events remain unchanged in their value position regarding the end-point; the progressive narrative in which the experiences are following a direction which leads to the end-point, and a regressive narrative in which experiences represent a decrement in the value towards the goal. These three

basic forms have many variants but as the author stressed the culture may limit the repertoire of possibilities, certain story forms are more accepted or more credible than others, or as Gergen and Gergen (1988) pointed ‘culture invite certain identities and discourages others’(p.28).

From the data collected an attempt is made to derive the story form of participants’ career accounts. Based on the individuals’ evaluation of their career experiences along the whole career course, the narrative form of the stories was identified and tried to be depicted graphically. The analysis reveals that career narrative can take many forms and these forms, which represent the subjective career or the career course according to participants’ perspective, are more complex than the objective career path.

Despite the wide variability among the forms in the stories collected, some common patterns are identified. Some stories show instability and take forms of a trial and error line which represents sequences of changes that have a positive or negative value towards individuals’ goals. This pattern is found mainly at the beginning of a career (Figure 2). In the second case it was found after a period of unemployment (Figure 3).

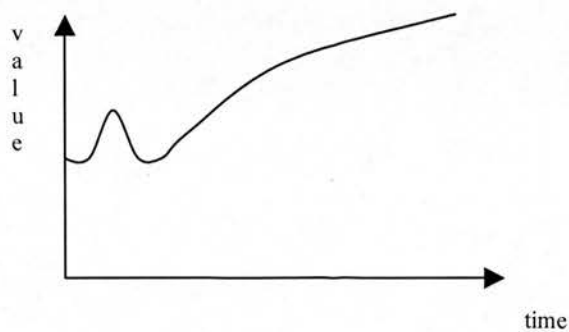


Figure 2. Trial and error career trajectory at the beginning of the career

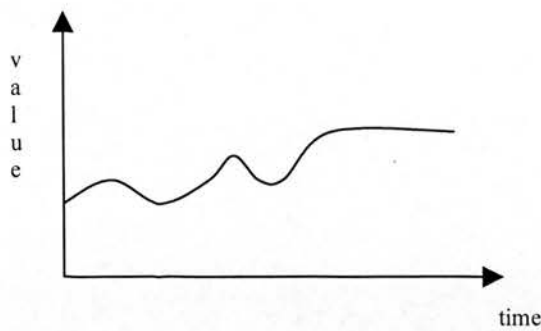


Figure 3. Trial and error career trajectory after unemployment

Another characteristic form is one of progressive or ascending course towards career goals. Different events into the career are perceived as contributing to career goals and the curve can represent either a slow ascending as in the case 76 (Figure 4) or quite abrupt upward change in the cases 79 and 89 (Figure 5).

Case 76, 39 years old, sawmill

It's an upward movement, since I started working all my moves have been upward... they have been quite slow, but upward... in that sense there's nothing to complain about... but it hasn't been easy for me to go up...

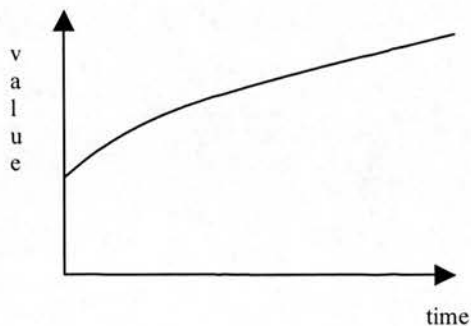


Figure 4. Slow ascending career trajectory

Case 79, mid 44 years old, chemical manufacturing company

"... It was such unexpected news like someone tells you that you won the lottery and you haven't bought any number!"

Case 89, 39 years old, fishing company

"After three years they called me and said that... 'From today your job will change, you are not going to be an assistant anymore, now you are the manager

of acquisitions' and then they said my new salary and I thought 'oh my God, what am I going to do with all that money? From then my life changed radically, many things changed"

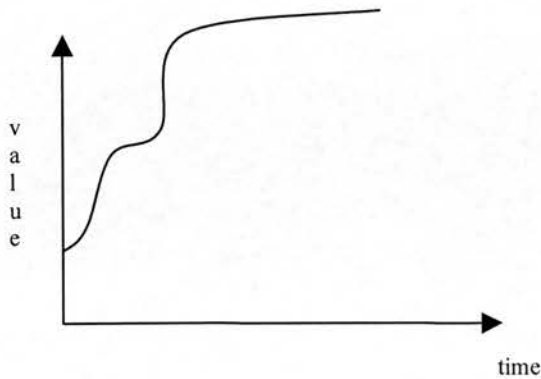


Figure 5. Abrupt upward change in career trajectory

Most of the career courses analyzed show at some point, periods of stability or a steady narrative, however some of these periods are experienced with a sense of stagnation; that is, events in the career course do not add or subtract anything towards individuals' goals (Case 87). Some careers take the form of a steady trajectory at later stages in the career course (Figure 6).

Case 87, 43 years old, chemical company

"I like doing different things...there is one day when I am going to find something that I really like...but for now...I just do my job, and I try to do it the best that I can... but (it is not) like when you see a very motivated teacher who gets up in the morning happy to do his classes...no, it doesn't happen to me"

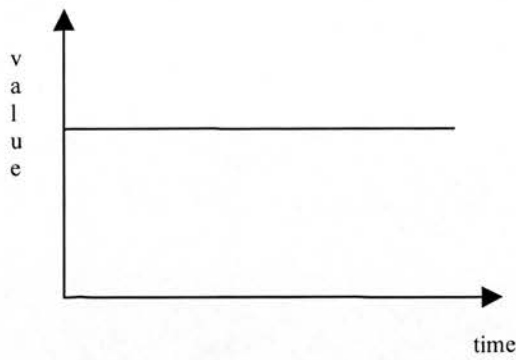


Figure 6. Steady career trajectory

It can be expected that the forms career narratives take, to some extent, relate to the objective paths associated, so, workers in the career paths with less mobility tend to form more stable career stories; upward movements are related to progressive narratives and the opposite for downward movements. However, there are cases in which there is no correspondence between objective criteria of progression, such as status and economic success and the individuals' perception of progression. This reinforces the notion that objective and subjective careers can be differentiated.

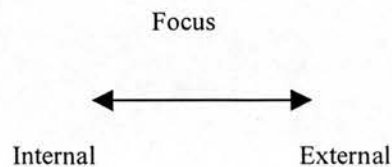
10.6.3 Career Stories

After analysing the changes in themes along individuals' careers and the contribution of events towards individuals' goals, a second analysis is attempted. It is based on the narrative approach to career and tries to identify some patterns and commonalities across the stories collected in terms of plot, themes, progression and other dimensions.

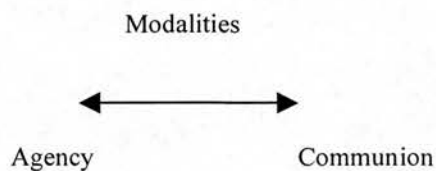
The analysis indicates that career stories show differences in terms of their focus (internal or external), the dominant modality (agency or communion), the degree of career salience (high or low) and the main orientation (social or personal identities).

Focus refers to the extent to which careers are directed towards inner or outer dimensions of individuals. At one side of the spectrum careers are oriented to

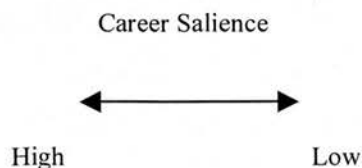
intrinsic aspects such as self-development or personal fulfilment, emphasising internal criteria of success. On the other side, the career focus is placed on extrinsic aspects such as social recognition, status or in the environment as an effort to control it.



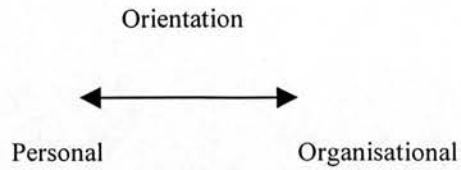
Stories vary in terms of the dominant modalities either communion or agency. Those which emphasise communion are characterised by the adaptive way in dealing with events, in the opposite side there are stories which try actively to control either the self or the external environment.



Career salience refers to the importance of careers on individuals' lives. There are stories in which the career is a fundamental part of individuals' lives or on the other hand, stories are perceived as secondary.



There are career stories that follow the traditional orientation which places careers in organisational contexts. In other stories, careers are located in contexts that provide opportunities for development either within or out traditional contexts.



Based on the previous dimensions and plot, dominant themes, motifs, elaboration and salience of possible selves, objects of identification and complexity in the self-concept, a tentative typology of stories was constructed. The significance of each dimension and other aspects is distinguished by their repetitive nature, number of details and extension (Lieblisch et al., 1998) and although every life story is unique, the common dimensions provide information from which the stories can be compared and contrasted. Four different career types of stories are identified.

- a) Careers as Self-development
- b) Careers as Achievement and Social Recognition
- c) Careers as Progression
- d) Careers as Adjustment

a) Careers as Self-development

Notions of change, learning and growth are the main themes in this story type which give it continuity. The plot of this career is configured around change and development across the career and more broadly around different aspects in life. Individuals analyse their career experiences in terms of the opportunities of growth they provide and a personal sense of fulfilment comes from being constantly in development.

In these stories the protagonist is aware of important processes of identity development, evaluated as transformation in the sense of self. Generally the changes are a consequence of important events, career changes or transitions that lead individual into a new identity. In the cases analysed the participants refer to revealing experiences that have changed the way they perceived themselves, how they behave, their values and overall approach to life. The new identity is perceived favourably and means strengthening the self and to becoming a wiser person, however the adjustment into the new identity is sometimes experienced with pain.

A frequent code in this type of narrative is self-mastery referred to people's effort to gain mastery, or perfect the self (McAdams, 2001).

Protagonists in this story are internally focused, that is, tend to evaluate their careers in personal terms and to guide their behaviours according to idiosyncratic standards. The criteria of success are internal and transcend classical notions of power and prestige. In that sense people seem to be autonomous from the common script of the managerial career and manager identity. In fact, the group classified in this story type is perceived as independent from their organisations and from any typical role attached to them and they do not see themselves as the stereotypical 'boss'.

The life motif in this story type can be described as self-actualization.

Turning points are characterized for the presence of external challenges that threaten the current sense of self. These challenges are experienced very intensively, with high emotional involvement.

Self-awareness, personal development, insight and learning are key categories in this narrative and seem to follow a steady trajectory. Lost possible selves are also presented.

“In the past I was tremendously impulsive...if I wanted something I got it no matter how....Nobody could take something out from my head... now I am more patient, more relaxed...I used to fire people every Friday and I didn't care, it hadn't matter if the guy had a family... now I've learned that life is not black or white, I am more tolerant, more considerate with other people, I have definitely learned. What made me change was the fact that when we were installing a new management system, someone that I had to train decided to resign...”

“There is a fundamental accomplishment in my life... my main achievement has been to know myself...what I am looking for... where I want to go... to understand what and why I feel what I feel...mmmhh, it is not a growth due to professional development... it's a way to live as a more complete human being”

“If you had asked me ten years ago I would have said to be in Fifth Avenue in the World Trade Center... in the 110th floor to get the best sight of New York... but not now...this doesn't mean to be in the top of the world...I've got the conclusion that one has to be whatever one wants to... what you have to do is to search for happiness...to feel fulfilled as a professional and as a person”.

b) Career as Achievement and Social recognition

In these stories careers are seen as accomplishment and attainment of goals. Stories tend to stress personal achievements and personal identity is characterized by self-enhancement, success and pride. Individuals exhibit a high sense of satisfaction and usually these achievements are related to victory or triumph such as to win a promotion in a high valued position, to get a special prize for the goals achieved or to be the 'first one' to do something.

One of the codes which describe this type of narratives is agency of status-victory in which the protagonist attains a heightened status or prestige among his peers through receiving special recognition or honour or winning a contest competition (McAdams, 2001).

Other relevant categories in the narrative analysis are achievement-responsibility themes. People report substantial success in the achievement of instrumental goals or in the assumption of important responsibilities that involve roles which require the

person to overcome important challenges. The protagonist of the story feels proud, confident in his resources to succeed and defeat important obstacles.

The life motif in this story is 'be the best' and the protagonist identifies himself as a 'winner'.

High points are related to social recognition, winning, and upward mobility. Also, external employability, marketability, money and salary issues and self-concept are descriptive of this narrative. The story takes the form of a progression or regression in terms of the approach to the desired goals.

In this group participants show high career identity salience, self-definition is closely tied to job identity and this identity serves in an important way to their sense of self worth. The protagonist looks confident and able to perform in different contexts.

Case 88, 45 years old, canning factory

"In 1996 I left the maintenance department as one of the bests in the area... actually one of our ships was positioned 13th in the world ranking and this is really worthwhile because it was an old ship and then it was working like a clock..."

"They said to me 'If we fish x quantity we will give you a prize, a trip to Cancun with your wife'...and of course I got it... Because I have always enjoyed to be challenged"

"I have won all the prizes they have given to me"

"Something important in my job was...it was that without any external source, zero, zero financial support, I organized everything here... from the stock to human resources...the production levels started to increase... when I just came we produced 3500 cartons per shift... when we had 3500 there was a party...but now, when there is a good production we produce 7000"

"I am the first one to start and one of the few who have survived"

"I wanted to continue my studies, but I didn't have enough money and I didn't want to ask for to my parents, so I started doing tutorials at the University and I paid my fees and also I bought my first car"

"Nothing in my life has been easy, nothing has been given to me, by anybody, and it was only my own effort"

c) Career as Progression

In this career type the plot of the story is instrumentality, determination and intentionality. These stories present a protagonist with an active approach to life and concerned about development, a person who initiates changes and is constantly looking for better options.

People have an active approach designing their careers, show a high job identity salience and they see career development in terms of personal fulfilment usually related to creation, development and challenge.

Individuals reveal self-knowledge and clarity about their assets, interests, motives and future goals.

Narratives make reference to formal learning as a way to realization and career development and they actively participate in training and other formal and informal ways of learning. In this approach individuals try to control the course of their careers and they do not leave it to external influences such as the organisation and do not accommodate passively to not satisfying conditions.

The approach to the future can be characterised as active and planned. In this career type individuals have clear and highly elaborated possible selves and usually with an outlook of time and strategies to reach them.

The main codes depicting this type are: formal learning, self-management, clear sense of work identity, non-routine, resilience and agency (achievement-responsibility, status-victory). Higher points are related to learning, fulfilment and development.

The life motif in this story is 'get what you want to' and its protagonist can be identified as a 'warrior'

“Actually I remember my first job interview, I was just graduated from the university and somebody asked me to see myself 10 years ahead and I said: managing something, I didn’t know what managing meant, but I saw myself being responsible of something, a mill, a process mill. Since then I see myself as a ‘process worker’”

“We’ve always been said that here there is no progression in the career ladder...actually the structure is extremely flat... what we have received is training, what they try to enhance is the concept of ‘employability’... they have trained me to do my job better, to take more responsibilities and wider range of activities within the organisation and also to be able to say ‘this is not enough for me’ and to look outside”

(Talking about future options) “I am not looking for a position, I don’t look for a position, what I look for is to make my job more dynamic, new challenges, to get good results in other things, to do something different, to start again in new projects”

“I have proved to myself that I am able to go ahead even in the adversity, so if I have done it before, why am I not going to do it again? ...I don’t have these worries... if it is not here, it will be somewhere else”

“I have had this kind of insights where I have said ‘this is what I want’... in different stages of my life, and I wasn’t different in my professional life. I was in a mill, an old and dirty mill, with a lot of deficiencies... and I said to my future colleagues: this is what I want... and this is what I always have wanted”

d) Careers as Adjustment

This approach to career is characterised by acceptance and adaptation. Changes along the career course seem to be externally initiated and the frequent attitude is to accommodate to the events that trigger those changes.

Career course seems to be shaped by chances or unexpected events rather than goal directed behaviour. The attitudes to future are openness characterised by envisioning possibilities instead of pursuing fixed goals.

These stories give account extensively of non-work activities (church, hobbies, family commitments). These activities seem to be satisfying and people are quite involved with them. Personal identity seems to be primary to work identity.

There are references to experience of routine in the job and sometimes this state is perceived with discomfort. However, people do not show an active approach to change undesirable conditions.

This attitude can be translated into passivity or sometimes lack of direction in the career.

Future possible selves tend to focus on the long term and future career options are not clearly stated.

The life motif in this story is 'acceptance'. In this career type, individuals show identification with their companies and attachment to their current job. Also, people tend to identify highly with non-work roles.

Codes depicting this story type are: organisational identification, dream, personal development, self-mastery, family issues, non-work activities and routine. There is scarce reference to agency and external employability.

Case 71, 45 years old, moulding company

"When people look for satisfaction through their bank accounts, this is not the right place to be, there are better options outside, so it depends on the values you have... how you weight them: money, personal or spiritual values"

"I am in a stage of life in which my most important project is to give two good children to the society"

"I am convinced that there will be always an alternative for any trouble, the first time I was said 'you are not going to work for us anymore' I was quite complicated, twenty years later I can enjoy it and take vacations"

"What I do value from this company is its stability... in the past 13 years I have seen everything: different problems, Asian crisis, recessions and we are always producing at full capacity"

"I never complain about anything, never, never, you may think I am conformist or even pusillanimous, but I never complain of nothing. If I can be characterised in some way, it is that I am able to balance, to level any change, any alteration in the environment or in a group, I'm always in peace as you see me now"

(Telling about an illness) “I always accepted it... it was my mother who fought against my problem”

(He sees himself) “In industrial production... there is where my experience is, my knowledge is, the years are... I don’t see myself in services... I can hardly see myself working in services”

(Telling about the future) “Along the years I’ve learnt that the horizon shouldn’t be so long, you can’t have expectations in too long terms, there is a point when you can’t control everything”

“I haven’t got a clear line for my future, only a global idea, I knew people that had planned until death, I don’t project myself so far”

Figure 12 and 13 depict the dimensions and the representative stories.

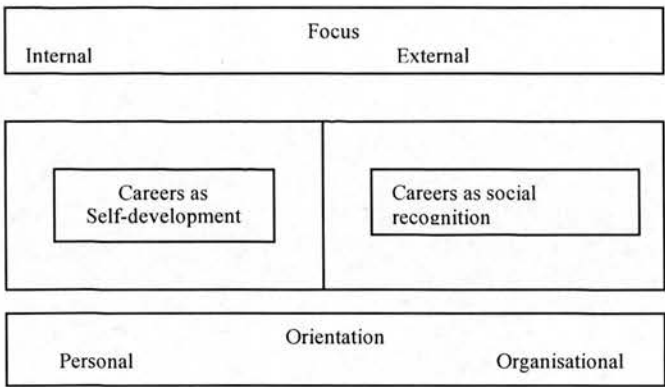


Figure 12: Career stories according to focus and orientation

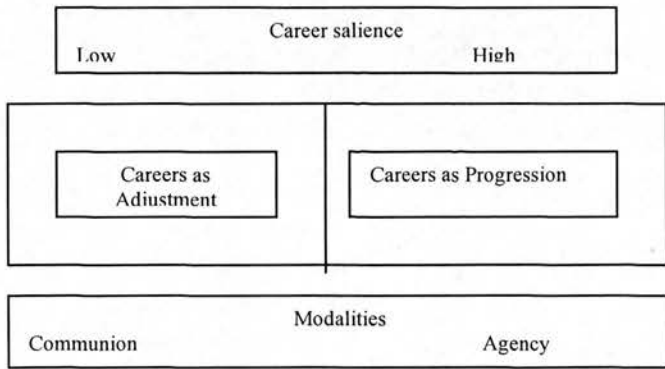


Figure 13: Career stories according to career salience and modalities

Work information, employability and social identification measures by types of stories in a sample of interviewees is presented in the Annexe VIII, working paper VIII.3.

Chapter XI

Discussion

This chapter begins with a discussion about the results of career patterns and mobility, the particularities of the sample and the context studied. Thereafter, the extent to which current findings match those from similar investigations is explored. Finally, the sample's configuration of career identity and its integration with mobility and employability are suggested.

11. 1 Mobility, career patterns and employability

Data on tenure, mobility and job change in the sample show some specific attributes that differentiate them from similar samples in other studies.

Data on tenure from Auer, Berg and Coulibaly (2004) indicate that the average organisational tenure across 14 EU countries was 10.6. The highest tenure was found in Greece (13.2 years) and the shortest (8.2 years) in the United Kingdom. In general, European and Japanese workers have longer tenure than those in the United States that report an average of 6.6 year of tenure (Auer et al. 2004). In Auer et al.'s research, Chile showed a mean of 5.5 years of employment tenure in the total working population (Auer et al., 2004). In the current research the average tenure was 10.9 for organisational tenure and 6.2 years for job tenure.

Regarding managers, in their survey of 2,300 British managers, Nicholson and West (1988) found that three years was the average duration of job tenure and nearly two third of the managers surveyed were with their fourth employer (Nicholson and West, 1988). In a more recent study in Australian-based companies from the financial and manufacturing sector, the average number of years in the current company for 470 middle-aged male and female managers was 9.8 years for males (Wajman and Martin, 2002).

These findings suggest that Chilean managers from the industries studied have more stable careers than the average working population in the country and than similar populations in other contexts. However, it is necessary to bear in mind that the population studied are composed by those who have remained in industries that have gone through complex times, so the nature of the study and the sampling process lead towards managers with stable careers.

Nevertheless the previous consideration, the increase stability in the population studied can be attributable to some extent to the characteristics of the labour market in Chile and the type of industries participating in the study. Chile has a clearly segmented labour market in which the primary labour market, where this research is focused, concentrates good quality jobs, with more stability, from larger and capital intensive business. In contrast, jobs in the secondary labour market are higher in number and are found in low productivity small business whose stability is markedly lower than those in the primary segment.

In addition, employment tenure is reported to be influenced by types of industry and educational levels. In the research from Auer et al. (2004) the longest tenure was found in agriculture and public administration and the shortest in financial services. By education, professionals and managers have the longest tenure and low-skilled workers have the shortest (Auer et al. 2004). In this research there are also differences in terms of mobility amongst the sectors studied. The fishing industry concentrates the population with the highest tenure and more years per job compared to other sectors. Forestry shows the opposite tendency.

There are some historical antecedents that contribute to the understanding of these findings. In Chile and particularly in the VIII region, the fishing sector, although its importance in economic terms, is small and concentrated in five businesses, quite traditional, which own more than 80 percent of the total number of fisheries. In 2001 the fishing industry experienced a complex situation due to a new law that set fishing quotas. That fact resulted in the closing down of an important number of fisheries

with a significant job loss. However, the industry managed to adapt and developed a manufacturing industry of canned and frozen products.

On the other hand, the timber industry, the second in importance in Chile and the first one based on renewable resources, has experienced an important process of growth and the VIII region is considered the timber capital in Chile. Sixty-five percent of the regional exports come from the timber industry, (Infor, 2006), it has more than 130 thousand direct employments and more than 200 thousand of indirect jobs along primary, secondary and services industries (Corma, 2007).

Both industries show different profiles, whereas fishing is perceived as a consolidated and mature sector, forestry, especially those areas related to the manufacture, shows an important development in the last years.

Regarding the analysis of mobility by cases, current findings suggest that mobility tends to follow personal career history. Workers who have been mobile in their careers expect to continue with the same trend. Those who have had one employer, either in one or multiple functions, expect to stay in the same company. Workers who think they will move to another position or company have had a history of multiple employers, different functions and low tenure.

An individual's history of mobility also plays an important role in perceived employability. Workers in different age groups, with less tenure, lower number of years per job and more movements across employers perceive themselves as more attractive in the external labour market compared to their counterparts. Data collected suggest that changes in employer increase the chances of mobility, that is, people who have changed company show higher mobility than those who have remained in the same company but in different jobs. So, it could be hypothesised that more radical changes might contribute to a higher extent to perception of employability.

In accordance with previous findings (Van der Heijden, 2002; Van Dam, 2004), age and tenure in the population studied showed a significant and negative correlation with employability. This confirms certain vulnerability of mature workers in the labour market. Not only they are considered as lacking of employability according to their supervisors (Boerlijst, 1994; Van der Heijden, 2002) but also they perceived themselves as less attractive in the labour market compared to the perception of younger workers.

Moreover, data collected here indicate that more mature workers do not show intentions of mobility in the near future. Other researches have found that the opportunities for mobility are reduced with age. Boerlijst (1994) in his study of employees aged 40 and over, working in Dutch companies, found that for this age group the possibilities of transition to other functions or positions are low. Based on the length of time workers have performed their present function and the likelihood to change job in the next five years according to their supervisors, the study concluded that in the group aged 40 to 46 years there was a substantial degree of immobility and this percentage increased significantly in the group aged 53 and more.

Some authors speculate about the causes of the reduced mobility in mature workers and aspects such as the development of 'career routines' (Hall, 1986), perceived age inappropriateness (Hansson et al., 1997), lack of developmental opportunities (Sullivan, 1998), need of security (Hall et al., 1970) and the potential loss of status and the risks of coping with new demands, for example ICT skills, may lead mature workers not to initiate new changes. In the current research, the majority expresses the view that it is not time to move yet and a minority indicates lack of challenges in their jobs and likelihood to move in the near future. Another group stated that regardless feelings of boredom and absence of future possibilities in the current company they had settled and they will remain on it. Age concerns, economic stability, work security and the intention to develop beyond work activities are the main reasons participants argue for staying in a less than rewarding job.

Lack of mobility not only influences perceived employability but also it has been linked to other consequences. Literature suggests that it might lead to overspecialization or increased expertise in one particular area, reducing possibilities and even interest in adjacent fields. This condition is referred as 'concentration of experience' (Thijssen, in Schabracq, 1994) and it is linked to monotony and lack of interest, affecting productivity. Accordingly, Hall (1986) has previously referred to 'career routines' and the difficulties in adaptation in non-mobile workers. Recently, Auer et al. (2004) have linked tenure and productivity suggesting that long tenure (more than ten years and especially above 15 and 20 years) might have negative effects on productivity.

In addition, the advantages of mobility have been clearly stated. Kraevly and Hall (2006) proposed a model suggesting the role of variety in managerial careers. They argue that career variety promotes adaptability through self-awareness and identity changes. In their empirical study, Beyer and Hanna (2002) conclude that past experiences affect adaptation of newcomers in new jobs. The authors found that factors associated with previous experience such as identities, knowledge acquired and personal tactics newcomers had learned for managing change, facilitate adaptation in new work settings.

It is important to note that among the reasons to change along the career, the sample of interviewees referred mostly to factors which are externally initiated (52 percent) such as vacancies due to company needs. From self-directed changes, 33 percent are personally driven (e.g. looking for something more fulfilling). Most of the interviewees expect to remain in the current company in the near future, either in the same or different job. At the same time, the majority of them expressed the view that it is not time to move yet and do perceive future opportunities for them in their firms. It could be argued that participants agree with the options of mobility offered by their companies and expect to continue being offered options of new jobs. To some extent there has been a fair exchange and retribution from both sides. Companies provide opportunities for mobility and development to their workers and workers respond with identification and intentions to stay. However, when workers do not foresee

possibilities of change, they seem to be more inclined to accommodate rather than to change employer.

Data collected also indicate that mature workers and those with higher tenure show less favourable attitudes to the activities that improve employability such as training or changes in functions. Van Dam, (2004) found similar results and there is some evidence that mature workers are likely to encounter difficulties during training (Baracat and Marquié, 1994). Moreover, Boerjlist (1994) concluded that lack of relevant training and development in workers over 40 interferes in their abilities to develop functions outside their fields.

The survey carried out in this research concludes that mobility influences the perception of personal value in the labour market. More mobile workers see themselves as more attractive in the labour market than less mobile ones. Even more, mobility real and intended in the population studied tends to be lower than other similar groups in other contexts; it is, to some extent, defined by the company's practices and participants rely on the opportunities provided to develop their careers.

Expected mobility is low and there is a reinforcing cycle in which workers have received opportunities of mobility in their companies, expect future options and decide to stay in their firms in the near future. When individuals reach a point when they perceive reduced options of further mobility, especially those older than 45 years, they tend to accommodate rather to look for options out of the firm.

Current findings are not easy to compare to those available in literature. Although there is agreement that mobility has been increased, recent empirical investigations across countries conclude that the notion of multiple job moves have been overstated (Jacoby, 1999; Web, 2004; Auer and Cazes, 2003). Empirical research in this field has been based mainly on Anglo and European contexts and in Chile empirical studies tend to focus on the secondary labour market which shows patterns of mobility different from the group studied here (Henríquez and Uribe-Echavarría, 2004).

Nevertheless, the population surveyed shows a pattern of mobility closer to that from the European countries and significantly different from more vulnerable groups in Chile. Data collected show a picture that is far from the notion of the end of stable jobs that American literature proposes. However, what is more revealing is that Chilean middle managers do value job stability and tend to rely on internal opportunities to make changes in their careers. Also, mature workers, especially those older than 45 years, tend to perceive themselves as less employable and show less favourable attitudes towards employability development compared with younger workers. These conditions reinforce each other, influence career behaviour and might impact negatively on personal employability.

11.2 Career meanings and the managerial career script

The notion of career scripts (Barley, 1989) allows understanding the relationship between the meanings of career and the relative influence of individuals, institutions and society in the process of shaping careers. This notion can be seen as complementary to those more psychologically oriented career theories which view individuals as active agents in shaping their work environment and career opportunities (Hall, 1986; Bell and Staw, 1989).

Career scripts are the interpretive schemes by which people fashion their careers. So collective meanings of career can be considered as the scripts, socially provided, that are enacted by the individuals and are the means by which individuals fashion their careers (Barley, 1989). The managerial career script can be considered as an institutionalized career form, a public narrative (Sommers, 1994) and since career scripts provide the roles individuals occupy, they also provide an account of an individual's identity, so associated to the managerial career script there is a particular managerial identity that is ascribed or which people ascribe to themselves.

After analyzing the major themes that emerge in the career accounts collected, the preliminary results point out that the dominant script is one supplied by the

organisation, dominated by notions of development associated to progression in the organizational ladder, stressing external criteria of success. This values notions of loyalty and commitment and managers do not distance themselves from the companies they belong to. It is also characterised by notions of control, power and search for recognition as the main criteria of success requiring behaviours that lead to higher responsibility and status.

There is no clear evidence of an agentic strategy in pursuing personal goals since a significant number of the interviewees opts for more dependent attitudes relying on the opportunities that are offered to them instead of an active search.

Career identity in the population studied is configured from the career scripts available. The managerial career scripts described previously provide individuals with a notion, more or less known and shared, of what being a manager means. The notion of being a manager, collectively shared, stresses factors such as power, control and success and individuals appear adopting the script in order to be recognized as members of the managerial collective.

This traditional discourse of careers as a hierarchical process is consistent with the social construction of masculinity. Traditional socialization in men, stresses values of power, competence and success. In his study of 560 men, Harris (1995) identified different 'messages men hear' and evaluated their influence in the formation of male identities. These messages include a wide range of ideas such as, 'scholar', 'control', 'self-reliance', 'lover', 'superman' and 'rebel'. Among the most influential Harris cited messages that emphasised learning ('scholar'), getting high standards ('be the best that you can'); and earning money, which are clearly in agreement with the current findings. At the same time, social norms promote competitive behaviour among men and messages of dominance, power and control are quite influential in male identities along different cultures (Harris, 1995).

There is also consistency with traditional Chilean work culture. In Hofstede's analysis of employee work values in more than 70 different countries, Chile scored

comparatively low in Individualism, which is manifested in fostering strong relationships and close long-term commitment to groups. Chile's highest Hofstede's dimension was Uncertainty Avoidance which indicates the society's low level of tolerance for uncertainty, need for control, resistance to change and to take risks (Hofstede, 2001; 2008).

Despite the previous findings, it seems that a new form of career is emerging, one that stresses notions of flexibility, mobility and independence in the labour market and, in opposition to the traditional career, does not value the condition of lifelong job security recognizing the importance of the individual's role in shaping careers. This new notion of career makes a clear statement in favour of the importance of employability and the role of the individuals in keeping themselves employable. So, in this sense, meanings associated with the new career are seen as antecedents, at least in the cognitive realm, of the behaviours leading to employability.

In a research carried out in New Zealand about how individuals make sense about their careers, some commonalities with this study are found. Walton and Mallon (2004) state that themes of learning, advancement, enjoyment, change and personal development dominate career sense-making. Thereafter, they conclude that some themes, which are part of the more subjective side of career, are in process of objectification, 'individuals find meanings in aspects of career that may once have been more internal, more private and are using them to judge and develop their careers' (Walton and Mallon, 2004, p. 89). Thus, a new discourse of career is being internalized, legitimating a variety of career stories. The authors also recognise that there is still a continuing presence and relevance of the traditional structure of career, the one of linearity and hierarchical progression. Even though career scripts are in process of change they also retain aspects of continuity.

Career scripts also inform of different attitudes to self-employment. In the dominant view, self-employment does not appear as an option of career. In the second approach, self-employment is a feasible alternative amongst all the options of careers

available. Again, this second approach to career reinforces personal independence in the labour market and can be seen as promoting employability.

11.3 Career identity

The self-definitions in the career context, that individuals studied mention, take a variety of forms and differ in terms of their complexity and richness. The groups to which people belong are also referred as part of personal identity at work. These findings confirm the usefulness of the tripartite model of Brewer and Gardner (1996) that distinguishes between personal, relational and collective levels of self. The self can be seen as a multidimensional entity in which different identities come into play and it is always in process of development.

Participants describe themselves in relational terms or regarding the position they take in relation to others. In this process, reference to professions, functional field, organisations and sectors appear.

Social identification theories recognize that the identification process can be directed towards a wide range of social categories. According to SIT and its application in the organisational context, Mael and Ashforth (1992) found evidence that people can identify with their job, teams, professional group, organisations, among others and the object of identification is associated with work-related attitudes and behaviour; that is, the more the individuals identify with their careers, work-groups, organisations or occupations, the more they think and act on behalf of their careers, work-groups, organisations or occupational groups respectively (Hogg and Terry, 2001b).

In this research, the social identification, and particularly the type of objects that address, can be seen as related to career behaviour, as it is described below.

11.3.1 Social identification and mobility

Current findings indicate that participants differ in the degree they share beliefs with and are attached to the groups they belong to. However, the population surveyed show, in average, high identification with their organisations and professions. These measures together with the need of organisational identification are closely interrelated; that is, individuals who identify with their organisations, at the same time identify with their professions. It could be hypothesised as generalized tendency to identify with groups.

Theoretical formulations suggest that organisational identification is associated to loyalty and pride to groups and their activities (Ashforth and Mael, 1989) and also that it can enhance support to the organisation and commitment to it (Mael and Ashforth, 1992). When individuals identify with a group, they act in accordance with the group's norms and values and that can be associated with stronger support for the organisation and stronger intentions to stay. Organisational identification contributes to levels of self-enhancement (Pratt, 1998) and withdrawal from the organisation would be detrimental for one's self-concept because leaving would be a loss of part of the self (van Dick et al. 2004a).

Empirical research supports the relationship between identification and mobility. In their study, Cole and Brunch (2006) found that organisational identification was negatively correlated with turnover intentions in a worker's group. Organisational identification was also negatively associated with turnover intentions and actual turnover in Mael and Ashforth (1995). In accordance with these findings, it is possible to predict that individuals who identified highly with their organisations are less inclined to change employer. The same could be expected for those who are closely attached to their functions or to their roles.

In the data collected there is evidence in that direction. Participants in the current research show high identification with their companies and, at the same time, express their intentions to remain in the same firm and some of them in the same job. However, it is not possible to conclude that identification is the only variable influencing intentions to stay in the job. Van Dick et al. (2004b) found that organisational identification explained turnover intentions but this relationship is mediated at least in part by the more specific concept of job satisfaction. They regard identification as a general attitude of the employee towards his or her organisation. This broad attitude influences how certain more specific aspects of the job are perceived and evaluated, resulting in lower or higher job satisfaction, which influence turnover.

In the current research, measures of organisational identification do not relate to age, tenure and number of years per job. There are different findings in literature regarding this topic. Hall et al. (1970) found that an increase in the length of time in an organisation was associated with increase in identification and the importance of identification. On the other hand, Mael and Ashforth (1995) found that strong identification does not require extended tenure, career success or satisfaction as an organisational member.

Literature on organisational identification stresses that organisational identification is influenced by organisational identity (Dutton et al., 1994) and organisational identity strength (Kreiner and Ashforth, 2004). Organisational identity refers to those characteristics of the organisation that its members believe are distinctive, central and enduring (Dutton et al. 1994). Organisational identification implies that those attributes are translated into someone's self-concept, so when the organisation identity is favourable and it has a positive reputation, organisational membership confers positive attributes to its member and a sense of pride of belonging to that organisation and thus induces identification. Organisational identity strength is the extent to which members' identity perceptions are widely held and deeply shared (Kreiner and Ashforth, 2004), as manifested in members' sense of their organisation's history, traditions, symbols, practices and philosophy.

Both, identity and identity strength either in the sectors or companies studied might be encouraging identification. Participating in this study there are large companies, most of them regarded as stables and prestigious firms within the region and some of them are considered leaders in their businesses. Also, identification appeared to be higher in industries that have a strong identity such as fishing and the textile industry. Both have a specific knowledge attached, have faced important changes such as mergers, downsizing and a big outflow of people, that lead their members to consider themselves as 'survivors'. In accordance, Mael and Ashforth (1992) found that distinctiveness influence organisational identification. Also, when companies face external threats as in the case of fishing industry that has experienced several regulations by the government, categorization is enhanced and the idea of being unique and separate from other type of industries may promote sense of belonging and identification.

A further analysis in the sample of interviewees, indicates that their patterns of identification are similar to those in the main sample, they identify with their organisations and professions (see annexe VII). Among the interviewees who expect to change employer in the near future, there is a group with specialized occupations and a second group that can be described as 'less satisfied'. In the former group there are qualified workers, more independent in the labour market that can move across different companies. This suggests that the level of attachment to an organisation influences intentions to future moves.

When exploring the reasons for job changes in the sample of interviewees, it is clear that most of the movements have been triggered by the organisation, either a promotion or a change to another function of higher status. So, individuals that have been "rewarded" by their employers, show identification with their organisations and do not expect to move from the company.

In the group that mentioned that they would like "a change" and have decided not to do it, the reasons argued mainly refer to lack of external opportunities and the value

of stability and economic security. Organisational identification does not appear as a factor impeding mobility when there is a need for it. Thus, it could be argued that identification reinforces permanence in one organisation or influences decisions to stay, but organisational identification is not enough reason to stay when current work conditions are not perceived as satisfactory. It is not clear the influence of organisational identification for not leaving and other types of reasons might be influencing that decision.

To sum up, career identity represented by social identification seems to influence mobility; that is, changes either in functions, roles or amongst larger social groups can be associated, to some extent, to the degree to which individuals perceive themselves represented by the groups they belong to. Particularly, there is a reinforcing cycle of organisational identification, reward from the organisation in terms of upward mobility and career opportunities, intentions to stay in the organisation and perceived internal employability. On the other hand, when individuals express some degree of dissatisfaction with their employers, organisational identification is not referred as the main reason for not moving.

11.3.2 Relative salience among identities

Identification can be addressed to different groups that differ in their relevance at different points in life and career. Ashforth and Johnson (2001) approach the issue of relative salience among social identities and argue that identities can be classified in terms of three dimensions: inclusive/exclusive, abstract/concrete and distal/proximal (Ashforth and Johnson, 2001). At the more exclusive, concrete and proximal levels are the 'lower order identities' such as job or work-group identity; higher, more abstract and distal levels are 'higher order identities' such as the organisation as a whole or one's occupational group. They suggest that lower order identities (e.g. work-team identity) are more subjectively important and situationally relevant than high order identities (e.g. organisational identity) so they are more salient and people tend to identify more with entities at those levels.

In the same line, Van Dick, Wagner, Stellmacher and Christ (2004a) proposed that different targets or foci of identification can be organised at three levels: the personal level includes for example career identification, the second level is represented by group identification or identification with different subunits within the organisation, and at a more general level of identification, individuals identify with the organisation as a whole.

Literature reviewed is focused mainly in the relative salience among organisational identity, work- group identity (Van Knippenberg and Van Schie, 2000) and identity based on membership of different hierarchical levels (Cole and Bruch, 2006). In this research the relative salience of organisational identification and professional identification are particularly relevant because both types are considered to represent the two types of career. Organisational identification is related to organisational or traditional careers, those careers developed in one setting in which the companies are perceived as responsible for providing individuals with options for career development and where individuals tend to rely on. Professional identification on the other hand, is characteristic of the 'free agent' perspective that suggests that individuals define themselves by their skills and can move across organisations to develop their careers.

In the analysis of objects of identification in the sample, the professional title is commonly used as a self-defining attribute. In accordance with SIT (Tajfel and Turner, 1986), individuals tend to identify with groups that enhance self-esteem and professionalism is underlined in occupations that are more specialized such as engineer in health and safety and fishing engineer.

Managerial roles and the responsibilities involved are also utilized as descriptive of the self. Identity theory (Stryker, 1987) sees the self as consisting of role identities or the identities that come from the positions people occupy in society, so as long as people assume managerial roles and have the opportunity to enact those roles, role identification is induced.

Most of the participants express their closeness to their organisations. In the career accounts frequent positive references to their companies appeared in terms of prestige, competitiveness, solvency, and opportunities of development, all of which can trigger identification.

Since the participants are all managers it could be expected that organisational identification is also related to the increase in responsibilities and status within the organisation that managers have, as well as the chance to enact organisational values and to represent the organisation in external contexts (such as clients, suppliers, professional audiences, among others). Moreover, the group of interviewees are those who have faced and overcome the difficulties that sectors and companies have experienced such as downsizing and massive lay-off, conditions that might induce attachment to their organisations.

In general, the identification in the group of interviewees is directed, however with different emphasis, to organisations, sectors, functional roles, hierarchic roles and professional groups. These objects of identification can be classified in two groups according to their boundaries and the closeness to personal identities. On one side there are objects of identification or groups with defined boundaries and distal to the individual, such as sectors and organisations. On the other side of the continuum there are objects of identification with less well defined boundaries and closer to personal identities such as hierarchical roles or functions. Identification with processes such as learning or development are also in this category. The identification with objects in each side is argued to have different implications for mobility and employability. This topic will be further developed later.

The relative salience of the diverse focus of identification is not easy to conclude. Results from the questionnaire survey indicate that respondents show high organisational and professional identification with no significant differences between them. However, both measures show different patterns of relationship with other variables. For example, there is a positive and significant relationship between professional identification and employability activities. When the group of

respondents is segmented according to their degree of specialization (generalist/specialist) results show that for the generalist group this relationship is not significant, on the contrary for the specialist group the relationship between professional identification and employability activities is positive at a significant level. This might suggest that specialists are more concern with developing their careers and actively engaged in career-oriented activities compared to generalists which might rely more on their firms for their career development.

These findings might also indicate that for specialists, professional identity is more salient than organisational identity, and also predict a different attitude to mobility compared to non-specialists. Moreover, results also indicate that those with specialized functions expressed their intentions to move company in the near future.

A number of authors have emphasised a current tendency to identify more with professions rather than organisations (Stewart, 1999; Ashforth and Johnson, 2001). Ashford and Johnson (2001) suggest that modern work conditions, especially insecurity, encourage people to construct a portable personal identity that works against organisational identification. They argue that 'many individuals are adopting a free agent identity, where they strive to continually develop skill sets that are no longer tied to specific organisation' (Ashford and Johnson 2001, p.45). In accordance, Van Dick et al. (2004a) found that career identification was associated with organisational citizenship behaviour towards one's own qualification.

Regarding the independence of professional careers, Storh and Reilly (1994) conclude that currently the psychological contract between employers and employees is mainly based on the intrinsic nature of the job, rather than on the extrinsic factors such as job security: 'it appears that the challenging, autonomous nature of managerial jobs may have replaced the corporations' former commitment to lifetime employment. Managers appear to be adapting to the new world of work by becoming more loyal to their professions than to their work places' (Storh and Reilly, 1994, p. 546).

With regard to findings concerning professional identification and employability activities, data collected do not show a generalized evidence of this trend in Chilean managers and this could be the case amongst specialised workers that are focused on their professions and can move easily from different employers.

Previously, Gouldner (1957) distinguished between 'cosmopolitans' and 'locals'. Cosmopolitans were workers concerned mainly with performance in their technical professional work and whose reference group is their professional colleagues in different organisations. Locals were those concerned with managing a successful career in their present organisation. The sample studied seems to be closer to the groups of locals, people who expect to remain with the same employer and to develop a traditional career within the boundaries of a single organisation.

There are some cultural variables involved in these findings. The study of Hosftede (2008) was previously referred, and in Chile a stable career has been characteristic of more skilled workers from the primary labour market. High mobility, fixed term contracts and temporary employment are conditions associated to low skilled activities in the secondary labour market and closely related to low payment, absence of social benefits and vulnerability.

Identities can be simultaneously salient, notion that resembles integration of identities (Baumeister, 1986) and holistic identities (Ashforth and Johnson, 2001). Individuals can assume different roles depending on the characteristics of the situation and the notion of simultaneous salience would provide different perspectives from a particular situation that could lead to act with greater capacities, in a more informative way.

Regarding the relative salience between social and personal identity, Ashforth and Johnson (2001) suggest that in current working conditions personal identities are perhaps more relevant than social identities. They proposed that 'as an individual becomes more self- centred and self-directed in their careers, the social identities become less salient relative to their personal identities, their portable self (Ashforth

and Johnson, 2001, p.45). In the stories collected there is no clear evidence of this tendency since participants tend to focus their identities in relational and collective terms, highlighting the membership to groups.

The previous classification of objects of identification in terms of boundaries and closeness to the individual allows proposing that individuals who identify with distal groups with defined boundaries are, to some extent, more dependent in the labour market regarding career possibilities compared to individuals who tend to identify more with roles, functions or who privilege personal identities. This latter group is seen more committed to process rather than entities, for example to learning, development or challenges instead of specific groups. Chilean managers seem to be identified with organisational groups, with well defined boundaries such as organisations, sectors or industries, as the case of fisheries and the textile industry, and in this sense they privilege the social membership instead of more personal or idiosyncratic source of identification.

The hypothesis above is represented in the typology of stories identified. Career stories were classified in careers as social recognition, adjustment, self-development and progression. Stories of career as social recognition and adjustment are connected to group identification; in the case of careers as personal development and careers as progression the object of identification is directed towards personal values and motifs or processes such as growth or learning. This differentiation of career's stories according to objects of identification has diverse implications for personal employability.

The notion of a managerial career script that dominates career accounts collected emphasises the role of institutions, being relevant the role of the organisations. Companies have an important role in defining individuals careers, organisations are those which provide career opportunities and to which individuals rely on when projecting their future movements. So, in that sense the traditional career script depicts identification with objects with well defined boundaries and distal to the individual.

As important as the relative salience between social and personal identity is the relative salience of career in relation to other identities (or other subidentities according to Hall, 1986). Career identity may be considered central when the career is important to one's global definition of self and dominates other identities in one's view of self. For some interviewees their careers are one of the most important aspects of their lives, they are career-driven and tend to show agentic attitudes. Another group are not so involved in their careers and develop different facets in their lives as important as their jobs. The degree of career salience also seems to have diverse influence in career behaviour.

To sum up, Chilean managers show high a level of identification with their companies and expect to remain with the same employer in the near future. From the results above, there is more evidence of organisational careers rather than individuality and the new type of career widely described in literature. The protean career proposed for the first time in 1976 by Hall (cited in Hall, 1986) and the boundaryless career of Arthur (1994) apparently do not find support in the current data. Mature workers still look for stability and some of them aspire to remain in the same job even though this can adversely affect their future employability.

The classification among the foci of identification according to boundaries and attachment to the individual also informs two different orientations to careers. People more identified with groups with defined boundaries expect to develop their careers within the organisation and rely on their practices and the options offered. The group identified with processes rather than institutions and also with individual rather than collective interests tend to rely more on personal agency in the developing of their careers. The different degree of independence in the labour market suggests that this latter attitude enhances employability.

The distinction between the relative salience of career in relation to other identities seems to inform of work attitudes and career behaviours. Individuals with high career

identity salience would be more involved and committed to their careers, supporting their employability.

11.3.3 Career identity change and the role of turning points

Identity formation and processes of change in identity along personal careers help to explain the relative salience of diverse subidentities. It is important to stress that identity is multiple, in process of continued development and particularly idiosyncratic, however, the stories collected show some commonalities in terms of how identity evolves.

Identity changes have been widely studied as a consequence of career transitions. In the career accounts collected, individuals retrospectively make sense of their experiences of change and identify some turning points and in doing so, they make their stories comprehensible for themselves and others.

It has already been noticed that turning points are described as particularly influential in career identity changes. Participants express vividly how certain events, experiences, insights or sudden awareness have changed the way they see themselves, interpret their past and foresee their future or, express otherwise how they have constructed their identities. From experiences of change individuals seem to recreate their identities and some of them have clear awareness of that process.

Turning points most cited referred to becoming manager, a key interpersonal encounter, family experiences, continuing studies, to name just a few. Some of these events are described as sudden and unexpected with great impact moulding the individuals' attitudes and behaviours. Some of the main shifts in identities are placed in aspects such as traits assigned, hierarchical roles (manager/technician), professional/organisational membership and degree of career identity salience compared to other subidentities.

Continuing studies and training are cited as significant turning points. For an interviewee with secondary education, receiving a university degree while working was a highly relevant event that has transformed his life in many ways. The experience of being 'professional' was reinforced, but at the same time caused him some struggles. It implied a new identity which he and his environment had to get used to. In this new identity he developed a different network and he positioned himself in a higher status in comparison with his peers, all of which created some conflicts in his close relationships. His professional identity became salient to the detriment of previous organisational identification.

Participants make also reference to specific programs of management skills that have transformed them, promoting awareness and a new comprehension of their roles, motifs and goals in career.

Experiences of career transition are also referred as turning points and they can be clearly seen in connection with new identities. Some typical transitions can be identified, such as the change from the operational to the administrative level, from a team member to a team leader, from operative roles to strategic roles, from staff to line, among others. Even though some interviewees express that they can go back to their previous roles, it is not their first option: 'I will do it, if I must'. Moreover, interviewees seem to be looking for further development.

The transition from technical to managerial roles is perceived as an important identity change for the interviewees. For at least 36 percent (9 out of 25) of the participants assuming human resources responsibilities face them with complex challenges, that are difficult to control, which have taken them away from their expertise. However, once the initial difficulties are overcome, people express their satisfaction and intentions to remain as leaders. Different factors conflate in positioning individuals in managerial identity. Enacting the role, receiving some specific training, new social connections and the external changes associated to the new status (such as money or other symbols) all help individuals to ascribe a new

identity. Again, for some interviewees, their identity as managers surpasses previous identities.

Other turning points come from outside work roles or are internally generated and imply appraisal of personal goals and life as a whole and they can trigger a process of redefinition of personal views and purposes. For example, getting married or divorced and becoming a father influenced the meanings of career success, changed career expectations and values.

Apparently individuals are aware of the identity changes they experienced, even though sometimes the changes are not easy to define or there is no clarity about their impact.

It could be argued that in the process of transitions people learn to deal with the novelty of the situations, and at the same time, maybe not always consciously, they are permanently creating and re-creating new identities. Along the career course different experiences contribute to a renewal of the sense of self.

Beyer and Hannah (2002) conclude that diversity of career experiences in adults transferred to a new position gives them the chance to enact a variety of roles, to explore different identities and to add more complexities to their identities in terms of roles, interests, skills, abilities and so on, all of which facilitate adjustments in new positions. Apparently a flexible and complex career identity can be the result of career changes or variety of career experiences.

The opposite can also be identified. In the process of configuring an identity, people make choices or take some career course and the resistance to change them can be understood as efforts to keep a sense of self. This is evident when after graduating individuals insist in working in the same subject as of their studies. It might be possible that after investing in building a valued identity people do not want to change it. The same can be applied to mature workers that have developed their entire career in the same field or settings. There is evidence in the current data that

after a long time in one position or company, workers develop a sense of confidence, of being good at something, a particular set of successful behaviours and a consolidated network and, while doing so, their jobs become an important part of their selves that they do not want to change.

The analysis above suggests that a fixed and strong career identity might cause resistance to change. It has already been stated that career change prompts identity changes (Nicholson and West, 1988; Louis, 1980), however it could also be argued that a particular identity can be an impediment to career change. So, career identity can be considered not only as a consequence but also an antecedent of career change.

11.3.4 Possible selves

Career identity includes a future dimension of what someone wants to become or fears becoming. It is expected that complexities in the current self concept can be translated also into the future selves.

In the stories collected there is a clear relationship between individuals' characteristic type of possible selves and the variety of work experiences they have had. They referred to their possible selves in terms of the identities they have been creating, so possible selves are as many as the identities people have.

Workers with a variety of previous experiences have had opportunities to enact a diversity of roles and in doing so they are generating more possibilities for themselves in the future. That is, the notion of career identity as multiple and containing a variety of attributes also includes a variety of future possibilities individuals envision for themselves. Multidimensional identities assume a multiplicity of possible selves. For example, participants who had developed or are currently developing a work activity parallel to their jobs (as self-employed, in small business, consultancy, teaching, among others) tend to see themselves in the future in similar areas of that they have been already developing. Those with experiences in

sales or those who have or have had a business expect to be full time dedicated to their jobs.

It seems that in exploring other activities individuals have the opportunity to try out some possible selves and doing so they integrate that information into their career identities and use that to envision possible selves at work. The degree of elaboration and salience of possible selves is related to the complexities of the identities.

Because people have the opportunities to try out diversity they have a clearer picture of what they want to become in the future and it is the possible selves which shape and energize individuals' present actions. As Markus and Nurius (1987) pointed 'action is then largely controlled and regulated by one's set of identities' (p.162). And, perhaps also have insight into the strategies of how to achieve the future self.

In addition, the relationship between motivation and possible selves is clearly stated in reference to feared possible selves. As an example, the possibility of going back to work as a subcontractor with no stability and economic insecurity encourages people to act in a specific way in their current jobs.

Future possible selves can be differentiated across career stories. Two main orientations are identified, those possible selves that are clearly stated, highly elaborated which also have the strategies to fulfil them or on the other hand, possible selves that are referred as 'dreams', a more vague view of which someone wants to become, a long term possibility which is still in process of development. These types of orientations in the future selves are manifested differently in stories of Progression and Adjustment. In the former, individuals address the future in a more planned and strategic way, on the contrary, stories of Adjustment show a communion attitude referred to the possible selves as possibilities not only under personal control.

To sum up, some interviewees perceive themselves in a variety of future roles and this is closely related to previous work experiences. Individuals bring a more complex repertoire of behaviours into new situations when they have faced past

diverse challenges, and this creates a sense of confidence towards a new variety of career options and thus enhances employability.

Career identity salience at different points in career trajectories appears to influence intentions to mobility and in that sense it can be seen interacting with employability. From the stories collected it can be perceived that the career course shapes individuals' identities but at the same time personal identities interact closely with the course that the career takes. This research concludes that the components of career identity (self-definition and social identification) and the process of creation and re-creation of identity influence career, mobility and employability.

11.4 Career stories

Through the analysis of dimensions, main themes, turning points and the overall ways interviewees interpret and make sense of their careers, four types of stories were identified: Careers as Self-development, Careers as Social Recognition, Careers as Progression and Careers as Adjustment.

Some key dimensions can be identified along which the stories presented vary. Career stories show differences in terms of their focus (internal or external), the dominant modalities (agency or communion), the degree of career salience (high or low) and the dominant orientation (social or personal identities).

Among these four dimensions, two appear related: dominant modalities with career identity salience, and focus along with orientation. Thus, stories of progression emphasise agency and high career salience, on the opposite side careers seen as adjustment emphasise communion and show low career salience. On the other hand, careers as social recognition are oriented extrinsically and tend to be placed in organisational contexts, on the contrary, stories of self-development are internally focused and personally oriented.

Previously the objects of social identification, either groups (e.g. organisations, sectors) or processes (e.g. learning) were described based on their type of boundaries (well or less defined) and degree of closeness to personal identities. It was also suggested that individuals' identification with groups with well defined boundaries and distal to them such as 'sectors' might be more dependent in the labour market than those identified with objects with less defined boundaries. Differences in terms of objects of identification are represented in the type of stories described. Stories of career as recognition and adjustment express identification with specific groups, on the contrary, careers seen as progression and self-development show identification with objects more diffuse and closer to the individual such as the generic process of growth.

How individuals interpret and make sense of their careers inform about the way they position themselves and also about their future career behaviour. It could be suggested that individuals with a history of agentic behaviour, who have developed a variety of work roles and for whom their careers are relevant part of their lives, have chosen to become involved in activities that prepare them to face the challenges of the current work environment.

On the other hand, a communal orientation, which can be seen more passive in terms of career behaviour and more likely to be associated to low career identity salience, might derive in fewer resources to overcome a highly competitive work environment.

Stories externally oriented, who look for social success instead of personal fulfilment and who place careers in traditional settings such as the organisations, might be less open to take risks and to try out new identities, all of which might lead to vulnerability or dependency of social entities putting at risk future career prospects. On the other hand, those stories in which individuals are primarily identified with idiosyncratic processes are freer to explore the labour market all of which might open possibilities for themselves at work.

Chapter XII

Conclusions

In the analysis of how careers unfold, the data collected in this research indicate that careers of Chilean managers tend to develop in a small number of organisations, with a mean of employment tenure closer to the average of the countries in the EU and higher than the average of the US (Auer and Cazes, 2003).

The data contrast significantly with the statistics for tenure from the total working population in Chile. Middle managers in the three sectors studied clearly represent the primary segment of the labour market. They are highly skilled workers in good quality jobs with the best standards in terms of wages and benefits, work conditions and opportunities of training. In opposition to the secondary labour market, here there is less mobility and the majority of movements are voluntary ones. This confirms that the labour market in Chile is quite segmented and primary and secondary labour markets need to be treated separately.

In this study, the mobility data indicates that job moves are mainly within the firm, that to some extent, denotes flexibility from workers. Even though the organisations where the interviewees came from, do not have a formal practice of career development, in fact workers have moved, mainly upward, organisationally initiated and based on company needs.

In the analysis of mobility, the types of industry and companies play an important role. Higher levels of stability are found in industries which after a period of turmoil have become more consolidated, and whose current workers have overcome periods of difficulty and despite that have remained in the industry. Also, workers from industries with a distinctive and rich identity, which have specific knowledge requirements attached, tend to show less mobility real or intended. Issues of identification as well as the reduced opportunities of re-employment outside of the sector also appear to be influencing mobility.

The notion of the end of long-term jobs that career literature from the US highlights clearly is not supported in the data obtained. Organisations and workers privilege a long term employment relationship and value job security. Organisations have provided to their employees opportunities for career development and since expectations from the employees are to continue working in the same firm, either in the same job or another, it is possible to assume that, informally, there is room for mobility within the organisation and workers perceived internal options for themselves. In terms of objective aspects, it is possible to conclude that careers in the sample are closer to the traditional notion of career or organisational careers rather than the new career or boundaryless careers (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996).

In the analysis of employability measures and related variables the current findings support the results from previous investigations (Van der Hiejden, 2003; Van Dam, 2004). Age and mobility are related to perception of personal employability. Mature workers (older than 40, and specially more than 45 years old), regardless of functional areas, sectors and companies, perceive themselves as less attractive in the external labour market than those in prime age (25 to 39 years old). Mobility is also related to perceived employability. Workers with a career pattern characterised by multiple employers, multiple functions and low tenure tend to perceived themselves as more attractive in the labour market compared to workers with more stable careers. Mature individuals can be considered to be in a complex situation since they experience a circle of lack of mobility, less positive attitudes to the development of employability (such as training) and low perceived employability compared to younger workers.

Industries and companies influence mobility and also perception of employability. Workers from industries in a concentrated sector, highly specific in their expertise and with strong identities tend to perceive fewer work opportunities outside the current firm, reduced options of future mobility and consequently have a low perception of external employability.

As the sociological approach and some theoretical models have suggested, employability is dependent on the structure of the labour market and the characteristics of the sectors and industries people work for. These socio-economic conditions however, seem not to be enough to comprehend perception of personal employability. Perception of employability is an internal judgement people make based on quite particular and idiosyncratic series of antecedents that make it appropriate and necessary to extend the analysis into more psychological variables.

The construct of career identity was proposed and conceptualized, and its relationship with employability was explored. The initial approach to the concept was by means of a questionnaire survey in order to access the objects of identification. From this analysis the main results point out that the men surveyed show identification with their companies and expect to remain there. Further analysis does not however provide any conclusive findings regarding identification and other variables, which suggests that the quantitative approach does not give account of the complexity of the relationship between identity and employability. Further examination was therefore attempted using individuals' narrative accounts of career.

To begin with, the analysis of career narratives was focused on individual meanings of careers and the results pointed out that the notion of traditional career is reinforced in participants' narratives. There are themes that pervade career accounts collected and they refer to contents of achievement, recognition, advancement, competition and general notions of success. The focus of the talk on both work and career, to some extent, emphasises these types of contents. The themes can be seen also as representative of the social construction of masculinities and of the role of work in male identity.

In a second level of analysis, different orientations are identified according to polarities based on the themes highlighted in participants' narratives. The polarities refer to the settings where careers are located, dominant orientations, notions of continuity, attitudes to planning and career salience. These polarities allow identifying a dominant 'career script' (Barley, 1989) or 'master narrative' (Sommers,

1994) that pervades careers accounts and represents the collective notion of careers. This dominant career script can be characterised as careers located in organisational contexts, with upward movements towards positions of higher status and responsibilities. These movements tend to follow a predicted sequence, mainly from specialists to managerial roles, in one or more functional areas. Some stories reflect the relevant role of career in individuals' lives and they show intentions to develop the desired path as a series of connected jobs in a planned way. Movements tend to be the result of organisational needs to which individuals adjust, showing a communion attitude. The career script is seen as clearly internalized by the group and a reflection of the social influence in shaping careers.

Since this notion of career is organisationally directed it can be associated with a dependency on the employer in a situation in which workers do not assume an active strategy to develop their careers and do not show the behaviours that lead to employability such as those associated with anticipating the future, exploring the labour market or participating in training.

There is another emergent career narrative, less dominant, apparently more common in younger and more educated workers, in which mobility is driven in an agentic way following interests and motifs rather than positions. This career shows variability and discontinuity, it does not follow a clear route and it can be developed in multiple contexts and in a variety of functional areas and roles. Meanings associated with this second type are closer to the renewed view of careers. Since employability assumes independence in the labour market and it is focused on flexibility to move across organisations, functional roles or locations, it is possible to suggest that individuals with this approach to careers are better prepared to cope with the current work environment.

A core focus of the analysis in this research is the construct of career identity, a comprehensive definition of which was attempted and its implications for career behaviour explored.

Career identity is conceptualized as an aggregate of characteristics at personal, relational and collective levels that people ascribed to themselves as self-defining at work. It includes self-concepts and those characteristics derived from membership to social groups, so career identity was initially addressed by its components or objects of identification as was stated in the research question 2.1: *To what extent the concept of possible selves and identification processes give account of the career identity concept?*

From the research conducted, it is possible to conclude that social identification is informative and an important aspect of career identity since people refer to teams, professional and organisational groups, as well as more extended collectives such as sectors or industries, as components of their self at work.

The narrative approach allows knowing the evolution of career identity. It appears that people start shaping their career identities at an early age and career choice seems to be the first main event in configuring career identity. Later on, different events along the career, experiences of transitions and the type of organisations, sectors or other groupings someone is related to, add information into the career self concept. Also, internal experiences, skills, values, motifs and so on, as well as turning points and future possibilities of the self, contribute to delineate a particular career identity. Since all these factors are in continuous change, career identity is highly dynamic and always evolving.

One of the more revealing conclusions came from the variability and complexity in which career identity can be described and this appears to influence employability. Diversity of work experience is influential in the configuration of career identity in the population studied. Workers who have developed their careers in different settings, in multiple roles, with a wide variety of social connections, tend to ascribe to themselves an extended set of descriptors that give complexity to the self-definition at work. Individuals tend to establish a core concept in their career identity (such as being an 'engineer'), which in some way gives continuity to the

self, a basic feature of identity, but at the same time people are able to translate a core component, like a profession, into a personal and rich characterisation that provides a sense of being unique and different from others. This sense of differentiation is clearly enriched by the diversity of work experience and this might be the underlying process in the findings that state a relationship between mobility and employability. Through the questionnaire survey mobility is found positively related to perceived employability and this relationship might be mediated by complexity of career identity. That is, a diverse career experience contributes to a rich and complex sense of self at work what is seen as an antecedent of employability in the sense that facilitates the adjustment in new work settings and also favours further mobility. The opposite trend can also be found. Baumeister (1986) refers to two 'identity problems', identity deficit and identity conflict. Individuals with identity deficit have not developed a clear notion of who they are at work, what their potentialities are and what they expect for the future; identity conflict is found in individuals highly tied to an identity that maybe provides them with stability and self-esteem but do not leave space for choices. In neither case can career identity be described as rich or complex and consequently they can have negative implications for employability.

The complex notion of the self implies different subidentities (Hall, 1986), a relative salience among them and varied dominance among the objects of identification. This relative dominance among the subidentities helps to understand career behaviour and specifically mobility. The stage in the work cycle seems to be influential since, for example, identification with the profession appears to be more relevant at the beginning of careers than in later stages when boundaries between specialities seem to be blurred. However, the area of expertise keeps its relevance in workers who have specialised roles or positions. These findings might be related to the higher levels of mobility that younger workers and specialists show when compared to the more mature workers or those with roles as generalists. Strong professional identification suggests detachment from organisations and a sense of independence in the labour market and appears to be associated with the high perception of employability shown by this group.

When assuming particular positions such as a managerial role, workers start building new identities and this role in particular tends to be considered as a turning point in individuals' careers and it is regarded as self-defining for many of them. This is especially relevant when just entering into the role maybe due to the socialization process and its initially demanding and novel character. Enacting managerial roles means that individuals assume the characteristics ascribed to the role, which subsequently enhance role identification. The same might occur with organisational identification, that is, managers in the process of acting as representative of their companies or as 'organisation members' tend to develop identification with their employers. This process of organisation identification is a part of the reinforcing cycle in which managers have received opportunities of development, perceive themselves as internally employable, expect further career options and project their future within the same firm.

The degree of relevance of the industry to someone's career identity seems to be dependent on the type of industries. Industries with high identity strength, specific knowledge, requirements or location in a small market tend to induce identification. Moreover, these industries are associated to reduced mobility and perception of low opportunities outside the industry.

Personal identities also come into play when analysing the relative salience of identities and in the current work environment they seem to be more relevant than before. Workers who emphasise their own motifs and who are committed to personal values tend to act accordingly in designing their careers and being more independent in the labour market.

The description previously proposed of the objects of identification based on their boundaries and their degree of closeness to the individual's identity, helps to understand mobility and employability. Individuals whose identity is closely attached to specific groups tend to rely on the opportunities the group offers, on the other hand, individuals whose identification is particular and idiosyncratic, as in the case

of identification with personal values and certain processes, are free from the boundaries of the organisations and other groups and have more discretion in the construction and reconstruction of their identities.

The particularities of the situation inform workers how to place themselves - in this sense it is possible to assume that workers who have held a diversity of roles, have more complex identities and can act with greater capacities in a wider range of circumstances than those who have had a more reduced number of roles.

In accordance with the dynamic view underlying the construct, career identity can be seen as an evolving condition that integrates past experiences, the present and the possibilities people foresee for themselves in the future. In this sense possible selves appear as core elements of career identity, they act as powerful energizers of future behaviour and serve to induce certain decisions and to try out some activities that might lead to build up new views of the self. Moreover, individuals with diverse work experience anticipate a diverse array of options in the labour market which in turn impact directly on perceived employability.

The four types of stories identified from the narrative analysis represent a particular characterisation of the career identity, with different focus of identification, orientation and salience of career. These stories are: Career as Self-development, Career as Progression, Career as Social Recognition and Career as Adjustment. Career stories which are focused on internal aspects such as individual values or self-development, located not only in organisational contexts, and whose protagonists show a highly agentic attitude that promotes a variety and a continue search for challenges and opportunities tend to favour a more complex and enlarged career identity, which also favours a greater range of career opportunities and later employability. This is the case of the stories that perceive careers as Self-development and career as Progression. On the other hand, workers whose stories place careers in organisational contexts, with a traditional notion of success and committed to organisations and groupings that might not exist for a long time, as in

the case of careers as Social Recognition and careers as Adjustment, might face a complex condition in terms of maintaining employability.

Many factors influence someone's configuration of career identity; internal variables, stage of life and career, roles held, institutions are among them, creating a sense of self that is permanently in process of change. Despite that, it is possible to conclude that a rich, diverse or complex career identity, influences career behaviour and the opportunities, real and perceived, in the labour market. People with a variety of career experiences translate that diversity into their careers identity and also into their possible selves. The richer the career identity and more varied the possible selves, the higher the opportunities perceived in the labour market.

It could be concluded that work history represented in the diversity of experiences someone has had, in terms of the positions held and the membership to social groups, informs ~~and it~~ is informed by career identity, therefore career identity acts as an antecedent of career change and in doing so influences employability. Workers with a clear sense of identity, who have also developed a rich, unique and complex notion of the self at work, have more resources to adapt to changing circumstances and to cope with the complexities of the current work environment and perceive themselves as valuable in the labour market.

The traditional career script, with values of progression in a defined sequence of positions, places the emphasis on jobs and status and does not necessarily focus on diversity of career experiences. Moreover, it is organisationally based which reduces the chances of change, not promoting variability and career identity richness, affecting employability.

On the other hand, the emergent view of careers placed in a diversity of settings, which is not only focused on positions and status, might promote a variety of career experiences and thus the complexity of career identity and possible selves allowing more resources in the labour market and greater employability.

The role of agency is highlighted in the new notion of careers; however, it is important to note that the capacity to plan is limited. Participants recognize the role of 'fate', 'fortune' or 'bad luck' and the position of improvisation should not be neglected. People are unable to look ahead to what can happen, but looking retrospectively they make sense of their decisions and experiences, find reasons and create explanations of their behaviours, identify patterns and underlying motifs, all of which lead to a meaningful and sound story. This process of retrospective sensemaking is one of the features that make the narrative approach a suitable method to capture the ongoing nature of careers.

12.1 Strengths and Limitations of the study

The understanding of the relationship between identity and career adds new elements into the comprehension of employability. Even though personal employability can be seen as multi-determined, in the light of these findings it is not possible to neglect internal factors as key aspects of the concept. The results from this research indicate that identity in the career context plays a key role, affects how careers unfold and therefore impacts on perceived employability.

One of the strengths of this study refers to the configuration of the career identity concept and the attempt to create a comprehensive integration of the related theories. Theoretical models from psychology, social psychology and sociology are applied to shape a concept that has been cited in the literature but which has not yet been subject of extensive empirical research. Moreover, the study focuses on career transitions from the individual point of view and most of previous research addresses the issue from the organisational perspective.

In an attempt to tackle employability, different measures were employed trying to provide a broad picture of the concept. Self-perceptions, attitudes, expectations and behaviours were considered in the operationalization of the construct.

The mixed methods approach confirms itself as an effective way to address the main variables analysed. Quantitative method allowed an initial characterisation of the

population in terms of employability measures and related variables. However, the quantitative method only provides a static and therefore incomplete view of the construct of career identity. Since career identity is more an evolving process rather than a permanent condition, the narrative approach offers a comprehensive view of a changing and idiosyncratic process. At the same time, constructing career narratives is a means to create a notion of personal career; that is, to organise a diversity of events into a meaningful and coherent story of the personal work history.

Also, in the process of telling their stories, people get to know and better understand themselves. When narrating their stories people integrate the diversity of events and retrospectively make sense of their decisions and actions. It was frequent that after the interview participants made reference of being able to achieve a clearer notion of their motifs and past behaviours, to understand better their actions and doing so to obtain a clearer sense of themselves and their future actions.

A limitation regarding the implications of this research arises from the fact that it is focused on certain sectors in Chilean economy and on a particular group of workers, so issues of generalisability arise. In this study, a clear and complex sense of identity, which encompasses a comprehensive configuration of self-aspects, a sense of belonging to significant groups and able to integrate valued social relationships into the sense of self, requires a context of relative stability. Workers in low skilled positions with a precarious work situation in terms of security, wages, benefits, and so on, may not count on the conditions required to develop a clear and enlarged career identity. These results might not be applicable to this segment of the working population.

On the other hand, there is evidence that Latin cultures have more collectivist values than other Western cultures (Hofstede, 2001; 2008), and in this sense it is expected that the emphasis on relational and collective identities found, is related to the broader social context in which this research took place.

In the light of the findings however, the original research questions need to be revisited.

1. How does middle-aged middle managers' meanings of career influence their employability?

1.4 What are the career paths developed in middle-aged middle managers and to what extent are they closer to the 'traditional' or 'new' view of careers?

1.5 What are the major themes that emerge from the middle-aged middle managers' career narratives? To what extent do themes of agency and communion emerge from their career narratives?

1.6 To what extent are middle-aged middle-managers' career meanings related to their employability?

2. How does career identity influence personal employability?

2.1 To what extent does the concept of possible selves and identification processes give account of the career identity concept?

2.2 What is the relationship between possible selves and employability in the sample under study?

2.3 What is the relationship between social identification and employability in the sample under study?

The career script identified, (although is an intensively shared view of what a career means and which the career expectations and notions of success are), its contents and themes clearly transcended notions of agency and communion, core aspects addressed in the research questions. Both orientations are descriptive of the careers analysed, however they are insufficient to capture the richness of the career stories collected and to identify future implications.

At the same time, the construct of career identity emerged as a core area whose applications go beyond the research questions. The notion of objects of identification

and its characterization in terms of boundaries and degree of proximity to personal identities might provide useful orientations in the process of career design.

Some conclusions also transcend the scope of the questions proposed. As an example, aspects such as the configuration of career identity and its evolution along the work cycle were not originally addressed but the analysis helped to identify events and turning points, such as continuing studies, that act as facilitators of identity change and therefore can help to open up possibilities for people in the labour market.

12.2 Areas of future research

The concept of career identity has an evolving perspective that changes over time and this longitudinal notion was tried to approach using the narrative perspective. However, the notion of career identity along the work history was accessed from the present point of view of the individuals studied. A longitudinal study would provide a more accurate understanding of the individuals' configuration of career identity at different points in their work lives.

The orientations that career identity can take in terms of their dominant objects of identification (e.g. groups or processes) can be translated into dimensions of an instrument to assess career identity. A career identity scale would provide another method to understand the relationship between career identity with type of jobs, professions, sectors, degree of specialization, mobility among others variables, which also might be the foundation to built an explaining model of career identity. Further research, of an international collaborative nature, would be a way to take forward the development of such a scale.

By quantitative methods extensive populations can be accessed which contribute to generalize the current findings to other groups. Moreover, an instrument might help to identify risk groups as the case of people whose strong identification with a

depressed industry threaten their employability. The design of strategies to enhance employability would also be supported by information of the dominant orientations in career identity, for example inducing people to involve themselves in new activities or widen their networks in order to recreate or create identities at work and to extend their perceived career options.

Regarding the population studied, issues of career change and identity in those who have done major career transitions would provide rich information of the role of identity in career behaviour. Also, in individuals who have been forced to move after the crises in the industries analysed might be especially useful to understand the role of the industries, organisations and professional identities in the adjustment to career change.

Some issues of identity remain unclear, for example, the balance between a flexible and developing identity and the lack of a clear sense of one's own needs, values and motifs. How people conciliate flexibility with the notion of integrity and sense of wholeness is an area still to explore.

Workers are changing jobs more often during their whole life, so socialization studies should be extended to mature newcomers. Socialization research and traditional socialization practices do not consider mature and experienced workers as their main subject. This group has specific needs and faces different challenges than younger workers which need to be taken into account.

In addition, the construction of identities at work is influenced by gender; therefore addressing female population would add an important input to understand the differential role of institutions and relationships in the configuration of career identity.

Since occupational identities are becoming more important, it is useful to understand how people construct meaningful identities from occupations that are new or not publicly recognised, professions with no clear boundaries, or those not socially

prestigious. Also, there is a wide scope for the analysis of non standard forms of jobs and their implications for career identities. Self-employed, virtual workers, contract workers amongst others, might experience lack of identification with a firm but there is no clear information regarding which their sources of identification are.

Literature in the field is based mainly on North America and Europe and it is possible to suggest that Chilean's culture may be more attracted to traditional careers and it may have more difficulties adjusting to boundaryless careers. However, more research is needed to assess the specific role of culture and social values in shaping careers. At the same time, it would be useful to investigate issues of identification in occupations that are considered having their own particular and distinctive culture and social distinctiveness, such as medical doctors, nurses, priests, among others. Also, the identification of those who form part of the non-dominant culture such as administrative personal in academic organisations and health institutions would provide insight in terms of the relationship between professional identities and the membership to groups and organisations.

Exploring these and other possibilities for further research would contribute to the knowledge in a field whose relevance is increasing progressively. Moreover, empirical investigation provides the foundations for an informed professional practice.

12.3 Implications for Practice

12.3.1. For individuals

Encouraging adults' participation in lifelong learning is considered one of the main strategies to improve employability. Developing knowledge and skills are ways to absorb and adapt to new conditions especially those requested for adopting and implementing new technologies. Learning or 'going back to school' is considered for some interviewees as turning points, as revealing and transformative experiences that turned their lives (and their identities) into something unexpected. In addition,

learning contributes to develop flexibility in dealing with changes, a basic feature of employability, as well as confidence in approaching new demands. In this context, individuals need to be aware of their own responsibilities in improving their employability and a sign into that direction is recognising learning as a lifelong process that transcends classical views of time and space but considering learning as a strategy developed along the whole life cycle, in formal and non-formal contexts.

Adaptability and therefore employability require the creation and re-creation of new selves. Processes of personal transformation and their relationship with careers, have been addressed mainly at a theoretical level through classical models of 'planning and then acting', which is, people have to embrace a 'personal change' to then act differently. However, to be able to articulate a concept of oneself at work involves a long process of 'construction' that supposes exploration, decision taking, formal experiences of learning, involvement in activities and groupings, along with internal processes, so in this sense it is possible to argue that creating new identities requires the same whole process of involvement in 'doing'. It is suggested that participating in new activities, continuing studies, integrating new groups among other activities can be the starting point for more internal changes. This proposal is in line with that suggested by Ibarra (2005) and it has implications for the self-management of career. Encouraging individuals to learn, expanding the scope of action in their current jobs and developing skills in related areas or industries are useful ways to start building new identities at work.

The autonomous and independent self that faces more choices, in which one is responsible for the designing one's own career, requires greater capacities or career competencies and makes career management and career counselling relevant areas of practice.

The role of networking needs to be emphasised. Workers require developing and maintaining social networks, trying to secure the diversity in their connections as a way to obtain social support as well as to promote their employability. If self-employment is becoming more frequent as the trends indicate, people might need to

create new sources of identification. In the process of detachment from the organisations, people require other groups to satisfy needs of belonging as well as those more instrumental demands traditionally supplied by companies such as training and development. Now the responsibility and costs of remaining marketable and updated reside in the person which makes more relevant for independent workers to develop networks or communities that help them to handle their professional and social needs.

12.3.2. For organisations

Developing employability is a means for realising company goals. Employable workers can provide the organisation with flexibility, which allows firms to react and adjust faster to changes. The unpredictability of the current organisational environment makes it complex to define a systematic career plan which indicates the sequences of jobs that newcomers should follow in order to be more employable. However, there are some guidelines that might help HR and HRD practitioners to develop a more competent and flexible workforce.

Organisations require understanding the process of identity transition that accompanies any career change, which means to provide people the time and conditions for the adjustment and to develop socialization procedures that recognize individual differences. A strategic approach to career development would require anticipation of the future organisational demands as well as short terms measures in the socialization process (e.g. managing the individual and group resistances or developing external signs of the new status, among others).

Since there is a close relationship between diversity of career experience and career identity complexity, organisations should encourage mobility. Different actions can promote this, changing tasks, broadening current jobs, project-like organization of the work, interim functions and chances to build up networks are some of them. Accordingly, human resources management has an important role in dealing with

risks derived from the 'concentration of experience' phenomenon and obsolescence. Since the population studied expects to remain in their current organisation, companies are in the best position in terms of the return of any investment in their workforce. Practices of placement, socialization, training, job rotation and continuing feedback are among the classical ways from which a core and stable group of workers can avoid the excessive specialization and improve their employability.

Accessing to individuals' competencies, needs and career expectations helps to design organisational measures to promote employability which are pertinent and feasible. Supervision styles and mentoring might contribute to that knowledge.

Middle-aged middle managers are a strategic group in the sense that they are experienced employees, who are identified with their organisations and who expect mobility mainly within the company. These conditions position them as good targets for investment insofar as they can for example act successfully as mentors of younger generations.

Employers and HRM consultants should be more flexible when considering suitable candidates in processes of recruitment and selection. There are biases against mature workers and those with high mobility tend to be considered as less stable in their careers. The acceptance of discontinuities in careers, recognizing the advantages of diversity of work experiences and the higher potential of adjustment that it implies contribute to maintaining a more flexible workforce that adds a multiplicity of perspectives within the organisations.

There are important challenges for the HRM in terms of motivating a professional and independent workforce, which may have low organisational identification and different expectations of the employment relationship.

The role of training in promoting employability has been overly emphasised, for example, there is evidence that training is likely to lead to mobility when it is transferable to other firms, however there are some constraints for adult workers to

participate in training and governments, organisations and HRD practitioners might support their employability creating possibilities to follow education at a later age. Since the initial attitudes to learning in the group analysed are not particularly favourable, organisations and the other institutions involved, should consider the specific needs of adult learners and assure the quality and relevance of training.

Findings from this research also have applications in the educational system. The socialization process that takes place while undertaking graduate studies leads to identification with the professional role. Students need to develop a sense of uniqueness and differentiation and the profession serve as one of the main means to achieve it. However, in the light of the current findings, this professional identification might also create excessive attachment to the role and impede explore other adjacent fields for which the graduate have the competences. Since younger workers are more likely to experience unemployment, developing a rich and open identity that provides differentiation but in not a restrictive way, might enhance employability in this specific group. In this sense, overspecialization, such as the engennier field, can be revisited.

In a context progressively more dynamic, the relationship between the self and organisations become increasingly more complex. The influence of identity issues in career design and its future implications on personal employability were addressed in this investigation. Current findings are expected to contribute to workers, employers, goverment and institutions oriented to harmonized the relationship between individuals and the labour market.

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Annexe I

Characterization of the sectors of the economy participating in the study

Manufacturing

The manufacturing industry comprises the elaboration of raw materials, semi-processed and finished products, which are traded in national and international markets. It is one of the most important industries in Chile and especially in the region VIII due to the high income generated mainly through exportation of pulp and wooden products. However, it is not an area that provides the majority of employments.

National statistics indicate that the rate of unemployment in the industry reached 7.7 percent in 2003 (lower than the national average of 8.5 percent in the same year). This rate declined from 1999 when the unemployment in the sector reached the 10 percent (compared to the total average of unemployment of 9.2 percent) (Encla, 2005).

Shares of workers by age groups in manufacturing indicate that 15.9 percent of the labour force are young workers from 15 to 25 years old. The remaining 84.1 percent are workers older than 25 years of age. That data is similar to the national rate of 16.9 percent for young workers (Encla, 2005). In relation to the type of contract, male population in manufacturing companies are mostly working under long term contracts (84 percent). The rest are independent contractors and workers provided by contract firms.

Regarding labour stability, the Labour Survey 2004 indicates that in manufacturing the share of workers with one year or less of tenure are 15.5 percent; 21.2 percent have between 1 to 3 years of tenure, 15.3 percent have 5 to 10 years and 27.0 percent more than 10 years of tenure (Encla, 2005). Compared to national data amongst sectors, the manufacture industry tends to show higher stability.

Fishing

The fishing industry comprises extractive activity and exploitation of maritime resources. It includes all the activities aim at capturing, hunting, harvesting, possessing, collecting, conserving and using hydro biologic species which have the sea as a normal or frequent mean of life (Subsecretaria de Pesca, 2007).

The fishing industry is one of the most important sectors of the Chilean economy. In 2006 more than US\$ 1,500 millions were exported (excluding the aquiculture) from which the centre and south areas of the country account for US\$ 511 millions and the 60 percent of the total disembark (Subsecretaria de Pesca, 2007).

Chile is the second producer of fishmeal and fish oil in the world. The production of those products is regulated and reaches around three millions tons per year that are essentially exported to Chinese markets. Recently has been a decrease in the capture levels that have increased the prices of both commodities.

The extractive industry in the fishing sector is small and concentrated in five economic groups, quite traditional, which own more than 80 percent of the total number of fisheries.

In 2001 the fishing industry experienced a complex situation due to a new law that restrained the allowance of capture for the main products. That produced an important loss of employment and the closing down of many mills. However, the industry has managed to

adapt and developed a manufacturing industry of canned and frozen products and according to the association that gathers the fishing companies in the region, the projections for the industry in the short term are positive.

Forestry

The forestry industry is not typified as a 'sector' and different activities within it belongs to primary, secondary or tertiary sectors. For instance, the extractive aspect of the timber industry is part of the sector of Agriculture, Hunting and Fishing. On the other hand, activities concerning with lumber such as saw mills, making of wooden products, and pulp plants belong to the manufacturing sector. Also in transport and services sectors there are businesses related to the forestry however in a minor scale.

With this distinction in mind the timber industry was included in this research because its high relevance, in economic and social terms, in the region where this study is located. Also, it can be considered as an industry with a strong identity (Whethen et al., 1998). The business is concentrated in two major companies that own the great majority of the natural resources, so the sector is quite concentrated, it is seen as highly distinctive, with most of the mobility being internal, high involvement in the community and a long tradition and prestige in the geographic area.

The timber industry is the second in importance in Chile and the first one based on renewable resources. Almost half of the country area is of forestry aptitude and it covers almost 16 millions acres of forests, out of which it has a 13.5 percent of the area aimed at producing wood products. The rest are native forests in different stage of development. Chile has nowadays a patrimony of about 5.2 millions of acres of forestry plantations that cover less than 3 percent of the national territory and represent a bit more than 13 percent of the total forest area (Corma, 2007).

The timber industry is mainly oriented to the exportation having companies that send products to foreign markets with different degrees of elaboration and value added. The main product is chemical pulp followed by moulds, saw wood, elaborated wood, boards and plates, doors and pieces of wood. These products are exported to over hundred of markets mainly in USA, China, Japan and Europe.

It has more than 130 thousands direct employments and more than 200 thousands of indirect jobs along primary, secondary and services industries (Corma, 2007).

The forestry industry has experienced an important process of growth and the region VIII is considered the timber capital in Chile. The 65.1 percent percentage of the regional export comes from the timber industry, being pulp the most important product that reaches 19.2 percent of the total regional exports (Infor, 2006). USA (34 percent) and NAFTA cluster (48 percent) are the main international markets where the products are exported.

Annexe II

Scales of Employability and Social Identification

Employability

Perceived Employability Measures

Perceived Internal Employability scale from Johnson (unpublished, University of Georgia, as cited in Eby et al., 2003):

1. My company views me as an asset to the organization
2. Given my skills and experience, the company that I work for views me as a value-added resource
3. There are many opportunities available for me in my company

Perceived External Employability from Johnson (Johnson unpublished, University of Georgia, cited in Eby et al., 2003):

1. I could easily obtain a comparable job with another employer
2. There are many jobs available for me given my skills and experience
3. Given my skills and experience, other organizations view me as a value-added resource.

The measure is rated on a five-point Likert-type scale, ranging from strongly disagrees to strongly agree.

Expected Labour Market Position

A second complementary measure of perceived employability is proposed. Perceived Employability considers the labour market position workers expect to have in five years (Sanders and de Grip, 2004).

If you look five years ahead, what will your position on the labour market be?

The following 8 answering categories were possible:

- Working in a similar job in his firm (job-match employability)
- Working in a different job in this firm (Firm-internal employability)
- Working in a similar job in another firm (External employability)
- Working in another job in another firm (External Employability)
- Unemployed
- Resigned
- Disabled/unable to work
- Don't know

Employability Orientation and Employability Activities

Employability Orientation (Van Dam, 2004)

1. If the organisation needs me to perform different tasks, I am prepared to change my work activities.
2. I find it important to develop myself in a broad sense, so I will be able to perform different task activities or jobs within the organisation.
3. In case of organizational changes, would prefer to stay in my department with my colleagues.
4. I find it important to participate in development activities regularly

5. I am willing to start in another job
6. If the organization offered me a possibility to obtain new work experience, I would take it.
7. In case of organisational changes, I would prefer to stay in my present job.

Employability Activities (Van Dam, 2004)

1. I am actively trying to develop my knowledge and work experiences.
2. I do a lot to manage my career
3. I make sure to be informed about internal job vacancies
4. In the past year, I have been actively looking for possibilities to change my working situation.
5. In the past, I have engaged in development activities that were not directly necessary for my job.
6. I am actively trying to increase my employability.

II Social Identification Measures

Organisational Identification Scale (Mael and Ashforth, 1992)

1. When someone criticizes my organization, I feel like a personal insult
2. I am very interested in what others think about my organisation
1. When I talk about this organisation, I usually say 'we' rather than 'they'
3. This organisation's successes are my successes
4. When someone praises this organisation it feels like a personal compliment
5. If a story in the media criticized this organisation, I would feel embarrassed.

Professional Identification

Base on the scale of organisational identification a second scale was elaborated referring to 'profession' instead of 'organisation'.

1. When someone criticizes my profession, I feel like a personal insult
2. I am very interested in what others think about my profession
3. When I talk about this organization, I usually say 'we' rather than 'they'
4. This profession's successes are my successes
5. When someone praises my profession it feels like a personal compliment
6. If a story in the media criticized this profession, I would feel embarrassed.

Measure of Need for organizational Identification (Kreiner and Ashforth, 2004)

1. Without an organization to work for, I would feel incomplete
2. I'd like to work in an organization where I would think of *its* successes and failures as being *my* successes and failures.
3. An important part of who I am would be missing if I didn't belong to a work organization
4. Generally, I do not feel a need to identify with an organization that I am working for (R)
5. Generally, the more my goals, values, and beliefs overlap with those of my employer, the happier I am.
6. I would rather say 'we' than 'they' when talking about an organisation that I work for
- 7.

8. No matter where I work, I'd like to think of myself as representing what the organization stands for

The items from all the scales were answered using a five point Likert-type response scale ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree.

Annexe III
Spanish version of the Questionnaire

Cuestionario

Sr. Trabajador

Los instrumentos que se presentan a continuación forman parte de la investigación "*Empleabilidad e Identidad de Carrera en la Industria Extractiva y Manufacturera en Concepción, Chile*", desarrollada como parte de los requerimientos para la obtención del grado de Doctor, de la Psicóloga Gabriela Nazar, en la Universidad de Edimburgo, Escocia.

La información obtenida es estrictamente confidencial y su uso es exclusivamente con fines académicos.

Cualquier comentario o requerimiento respecto de su participación, no dude en comunicarse a gnazar@udec.cl

Agradecemos sinceramente su participación.

Gabriela Nazar
Estudiante de Doctorado
University de Edimburgo

Antecedentes Personales

Nombre

Dirección correo electrónico

Fecha de nacimiento

Escolaridad

Título

Empresa

Cargo actual

Cargo Jefe directo

Antigüedad en el cargo actual

Antigüedad en la Empresa

Por favor indique a continuación las funciones laborales que ha desempeñado desde que inició su desarrollo profesional.

Periodo	
Cargo o Función	
Empresa	
Periodo	
Cargo o función	
Empresa	
Periodo	
Cargo o función	
Empresa	
Periodo	
Cargo o función	
Empresa	

Cuestionario sobre Empleabilidad²

SECCION I

A continuación usted encontrará una serie afirmaciones destinadas a conocer la relación entre usted y el mercado laboral interno y externo. Le solicitamos que frente a cada una de ellas, indique su grado de **acuerdo** o **desacuerdo**, indican con una X bajo la columna correspondiente. No hay respuestas acertadas o erróneas, se trata sólo de conocer su percepción sobre el tema lo que la veracidad de sus respuestas es especialmente importante.

La información resultante es estrictamente confidencial y su uso es exclusivamente con fines académicos.

Agradecemos sinceramente su cooperación

	Muy en Desacuerdo	En Desacuerdo	Ni acuerdo, ni Desacuerdo	De Acuerdo	Muy de acuerdo
1. Mi empresa me considera como un recurso importante para la organización.					
2. Dadas mis habilidades y experiencia, mi empresa me considera un recurso que agrega valor a la organización.					
3. Existen muchas oportunidades disponibles para mi en la empresa para la que trabajo.					
4. Podría fácilmente encontrar un trabajo equivalente a mi empleo actual en otra empresa.					
5. Dadas mis habilidades y experiencia existen muchos trabajos disponibles para mi en el mercado laboral.					
6. Dadas mis habilidades y experiencia, otras empresas me ven como un recurso valioso.					
7. Si mi organización me necesitara para desarrollar tareas diferentes a las actuales, me siento preparado para hacerlo.					
8. Considero importante mi desarrollo en un sentido amplio, de manera de ser capaz de desempeñar diferentes tareas o ejercer diversos roles dentro de la organización.					
9. En caso de cambios en mi organización, preferiría mantenerme en mi actual departamento con mis colegas.					
10. Considero importante participar en actividades de desarrollo profesional de manera regular					

² Adaptados y traducidos desde Johnson, 2001 (en Eby *et al.*, 2004), Sander and Grip (2004) y van Dam (2004).

11. Si mi empresa me ofrece a la posibilidad de tener buenas experiencias profesionales, sin duda las tomo.					
12. En caso de cambios en mi empresa, preferiría permanecer en mi actual trabajo.					
13. Soy activo tratando de desarrollar mi conocimiento y experiencia laboral					
14. Hago bastante por manejar mi carrera laboral					
15. Me aseguro de estar informado de las opciones de trabajo dentro de la empresa					
16. En el último año, he estado activamente buscando posibilidad de cambiar mi situación laboral actual					
17. En los años recién pasados he estado involucrado en actividades de desarrollo profesional que no están directamente ligadas con mi empleo actual					
18. Estoy tratando activamente de mejorar mi empleabilidad					

SECCION II

**Si Ud. se proyecta cinco años más adelante, ¿cuál cree será su posición en el mercado laboral?
Elija una de las siguientes opciones de respuesta.**

- ☐ Trabajando en el mismo cargo en la misma empresa actual
- ☐ Trabajando en un cargo diferente en la misma empresa actual
- ☐ Trabajando en un cargo similar en una empresa diferente a la actual
- ☐ Trabajando en un cargo y empresa diferentes a los actuales
- ☐ Desempleado
- ☐ Retirado
- ☐ Incapacitado para trabajar
- ☐ No sabe

Cuestionario Identificación Laboral³

Para cada una de las afirmaciones que se presentan a continuación indique su grado de **acuerdo o desacuerdo**, indicando con una X bajo el casillero que corresponda.

	Muy en Desacuerdo	En Desacuerdo	Ni acuerdo, ni Desacuerdo	Acuerdo	Muy de Acuerdo
1. Cuando alaban a mi empresa lo siento como un elogio personal.					
2. Cuando alguien critica mi empresa, lo siento como un insulto personal.					
3. Me interesa mucho lo que otros piensan acerca de mi empresa.					
4. Los éxitos de mi empresa son también mis éxitos personales.					
5. Me sentiría avergonzado si mi empresa fuera criticada públicamente.					
6. Cuando critican mi profesión lo siento como un insulto personal.					
7. Cuando me refiero a las personas de mi misma profesión generalmente digo 'nosotros' en vez de 'ellos'.					
8. Los logros de mi profesión son también mis logros personales.					
9. Me sentiría avergonzado si mi profesión fuera criticada públicamente.					
10. Me gusta trabajar en una empresa y pensar que sus éxitos y fracasos son también mis éxitos y fracasos.					

³ Adaptados y traducidos de Mael and Ashforth (1992) y Kreiner and Ashforth (2004).

	Muy en Desacuerdo	En Desacuerdo	Ni acuerdo, ni Desacuerdo	Acuerdo	Muy de acuerdo
11. Cuando me refiero a mi empresa, generalmente digo 'nosotros' en vez de 'ellos'.					
12. Me interesa mucho lo que otros piensan acerca de mi profesión.					
13. Si no perteneciera a ninguna empresa, una parte importante de quién yo soy me faltaría.					
14. Generalmente, no siento que necesite identificarme con la empresa para la que trabajo.					
15. Me sentiría incompleto sin una empresa para la cual trabajar.					
16. Generalmente, mientras más coincidencia hay entre mis metas, valores y creencias con los de mi empleador, mejor me siento.					
17. Prefiero decir 'nosotros' antes que 'ellos' cuando me refiero a la empresa para la que trabajo.					
18. Me gusta pensar en mi mismo como representante de la empresa para la que trabajo, independientemente de cuál sea.					
19. Cuando elogian a personas de mi profesión lo siento como un elogio personal.					

POR FAVOR NO DEJE NINGUNA PREGUNTA SIN CONTESTAR.

MUCHAS GRACIAS POR SU COLABORACIÓN.

Annexe IV
English version of the Questionnaire

Questionnaire

Dear Sir:

The instruments that follow are part of the research 'Employability and career identity in middle managers in the VIII Region, Chile', developed in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of Gabriela Nazar at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland.

The information collected is strictly confidential and the results will be used exclusively to academic purposes.

Any further information, please do not hesitate to contact Gabriela Nazar: gnazar@udec.cl.

Many thanks for your cooperation

Gabriela Nazar
PhD Student
The Moray House School of Education
University of Edinburgh

Personal Information

Name

E-mail address

Date of birth

Degree

Title

Company

Current job position

Boss's position

Job tenure

Organisational tenure

Please, in the spaces below indicate the positions you have held since you started your work experience.

Period	
--------	--

Position	
----------	--

Company	
---------	--

Period	
--------	--

Position	
----------	--

Company	
---------	--

Period	
--------	--

Position	
----------	--

Company	
---------	--

Period	
--------	--

Position	
----------	--

Company	
---------	--

Period	
--------	--

Position	
----------	--

Company	
---------	--

Employability Questionnaire¹

SECTION I

In the next section you will find a series of statements about the relationship between yourself and the internal and external labour markets. Please indicate the degree of agreement or disagreement with each of the sentence, writing a X below the right column. There is no right or wrong answer, and what this instrument aims to do is to know your perception about the topic so the authenticity of your answer is especially important.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

	I strongly disagree	I disagree	Not agree nor disagree	I agree	I strongly agree
1. My company views me as an asset to the organization					
2. Given my skills and experience, the company that I work for views me as a value-added resource					
3. There are many opportunities available for me in my company					
4. I could easily obtain a comparable job with another employer					
5. There are many jobs available for me given my skills and experience					
6. Given my skills and experience, other organizations view me as a value-added resource.					
7. If the organisation needs me to perform different tasks, I am prepared to change my work activities					
8. I find it important to develop myself in a broad sense, so I will be able to perform different task activities or jobs within the organisation.					
9. In case of organizational changes, would prefer to stay in my department with my colleagues.					
8. I find it important to participate in development activities regularly take it.					
9. If the organisation offered me a possibility to obtain new work experience, I would take it					
10. In case of organisational changes, I would prefer to stay in my present job.					

	I strongly disagree	I disagree	Not agree nor disagree	I agree	I strongly agree
11. I am actively trying to develop my knowledge and work experiences.					
12. I do a lot to manage my career					
13. I make sure to be informed about internal job vacancies					
14. In the past year, I have been actively looking for possibilities to change my working situation.					
15. In the past, I have engaged in development activities that were not directly necessary for my job.					
16. I am actively trying to increase my employability.					

SECTION II

If you look five years ahead, what will your position on the labour market be?

- ☐ Working in a similar job in his firm (job-match employability)
- ☐ Working in a different job in this firm
- ☐ Working in a similar job in another firm
- ☐ Working in another job in another firm
- ☐ Unemployed
- ☐ Resigned
- ☐ Disabled/unable to work
- ☐ Don't know

Questionnaire
Social identification ²

For each of the statements below please indicate your degree of agreement or disagreement with a X in the correspondent column.

7. When someone criticizes my profession, I feel like a personal insult
8. I am very interested in what others think about my profession
9. When I talk about this organization, I usually say 'we' rather than 'they'
10. This profession's successes are my successes
11. When someone praises my profession it feels like a personal compliment
12. If a story in the media criticized this profession, I would feel embarrassed.

	I strongly disagree	I disagree	Not agree nor disagree	I agree	I strongly agree
2. When someone praises this organisation it feels like a personal compliment					
3. When someone criticizes my organization, I feel like a personal insult					
4. I am very interested in what others think about my organisation					
5. This organisation's successes are my successes					
6. If a story in the media criticized this organisation, I would feel embarrassed					
7. When someone criticizes my profession, I feel like a personal insult					
8. When I talk about this organization, I usually say 'we' rather than 'they'					
9. This profession's successes are my successes					
10. If a story in the media criticized this profession, I would feel embarrassed.					
11. Me gusta trabajar en una empresa y pensar que sus éxitos y fracasos son también mis éxitos y fracasos.					

	I strongly disagree	I disagree	Not agree nor disagree	I agree	I strongly agree
12. When I talk about this organisation, I usually say 'we' rather than 'they'					
13. I am very interested in what others think about my profession.					
14. An important part of who I am would be missing if I didn't belong to a work organization					
15. Generally, I do not feel a need to identify with an organization that I am working for (R)					
16. Without an organization to work for, I would feel incomplete					
17. Generally, the more my goals, values, and beliefs overlap with those of my employer, the happier I am.					
18. I would rather say 'we' than 'they' when talking about an organisation that I work for					
19. No matter where I work, I'd like to think of myself as representing what the organization stands					
20. This profession's successes are my successes					

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR COOPERATION

Annexe V
Outline of the Interview

Could you tell me about your career story since you start working?

What are the higher points?

What are the lower points?

What are the turning points?

How do you define/ introduce yourself at work?

If you have to look for a job, how do you present yourself in the labour market?

In the case of being unemployed, what do you do? Do you look for a job? Where? How?

How do you see yourself in the future?

How easy is for you to imagine your life in this scenario

How clear is the mental picture you imagine

How often do you think about this possible future?

What do you think you will do when retired?

Do you recognize a person or mentor that have had any influence in your career

Who do you identify as your peers?

Annexe VI

Informed Consent

The research 'Employability and Career Identity in middle-managers in Chile' aims to understand the employability concept and the variables involved, in a population of male, middle-aged managers in three sectors in the region VIII in Chile. The study is being developed by Gabriela Nazar in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of PhD at the University of Edinburgh.

The information collected in this investigation is confidential and its use is exclusively for academic purposes. Once finished the research, participants can have access to the general results of the questionnaire-survey. Identifying information will be suppressed to safeguard the identity of the individuals and companies involved.

As participant in this study you are requested to agree to publish the results of the investigation in scientific journals in English and Spanish and to present them in conferences in the area.

For any further information, please contact Gabriela Nazar. Gabriela.A.Nazar@education.ed.ac.uk

Thank you very much

Gabriela Nazar
PhD Student
The Moray House School of Education
University of Edinburgh

The University of Edinburgh is a charitable body, registered in Scotland, with registration number SC005336.

Annexe VII
Quantitative results and comparison per sample

Table VII.1
Comparison of frequencies in career paths in the three samples

Condition		Total sample (N=85)	Group aged 39-50 (N=42)	Interviewees group (N=22)
One employer- multiple Functions	Frequency	21	12	7
	Percentage	25	29	32
Multiple employer-multiple functions- low tenure	Frequency	25	7	4
	Percentage	29	17	18
Multiple employer One work line	Frequency	11	7	5
	Percentage	13	17	23
Multiple employer Multiple functions- high tenure	Frequency	24	14	6
	Percentage	28	33	27
One employer One work line	Frequency	4	2	0
	Percentage	5	5	0
Total		100	100	100

Table VII.2
Comparison of employability measures in the three samples

		Total Sample	Group aged 39-50	Interviewees group
Internal Employability	M	4	4.1	4
	S D	.76	.75	.67
External Employability	M	3.4	3.5	3.4
	SD	.84	.72	.8
Employability Orientation	M	4	4	4
	SD	.44	.43	.34
Employability Activities	M	3.7	3.7	3.7
	SD	.58	.5	.54
Total	N	86	42	21

Table VII.3

Comparison of Expected Labour Market position in the three samples

Condition		Total sample (N=85)	Group aged 39-50 (N=42)	Interviewees group (N=25)
Working in a similar job in this firm	Frequency	23	11	5
	Percentage	27	26	23
Working in a different job in this firm	Frequency	46	23	12
	Percentage	54	55	55
Working in a similar job in another firm	Frequency	3	2	2
	Percentage	4	5	9
Working in a different job in another firm	Frequency	9	4	2
	Percentage	11	9	9
Retired	Frequency	1	0	0
	Percentage	1	0	0
Don't Know	Frequency	3	2	1
	Percentage	4	5	4.5
Total		85	100	100

Table VII.4

Comparison of social identification measures in the three samples

		Total Sample	Group aged 39-50	Interviewees group
Organisational Identification	M	4.7	4.2	4.1
	S D	.54	.56	.50
Professional Identification	M	3.7	3.7	3.7
	SD	.85	.89	.89
Need of Organisational Identification	M	3.5	3.7	3.6
	SD	.59	.63	.70
Total	N	86	42	21

Annexe VIII
Working Paper

Table VIII.1

Work information and career movements in a sample of interviewees

Case	Age	Sector	Organizational tenure	Number of employers	Expected Labour market position	Career movements
60	51	3	6	3	1	↑F-E↑-EF↓
37	49	3	14	4	1	↑F-E↓F-E↑-E-E↑F
90	48	3	6	7		E↑F-E↑-E= E↑F-E↓-=-E=
27	42	1	5	5	8	EF-E↑-E↑-E↓
88	45	1	16	2		↑F-↑F-E-↑F
82	44	3	8	5	2	E-E-E-E-E↑
79	44	3	16	1	2	↑F-↑F-↑
86	44	2	17	4	2	E-E-E-↑F-↑
80	41	3	6	3	2	E-↑F-=-F-E↓-↑
41	43	3	19	2		E↑F-↑-↑F-↑
50	42	2	11	4	2	E↑F-E↓F- E↑F-↑
71	45	2	3.5	5	2	E↑F-↑F-E=-E↑-E=
24	40	3	8	3	4	EF-EF
76	39	2	13	1	2	↑F-↑F-F
1	39	1	7	2	1	E-E-↑

Table VIII.2

Example of the qualitative analysis and codification process in participants with career path one

NVivo codes/ Case	79	83	76	87	88	41
Career moves and decision making process						
1 career expectations ~change~	1		1	1	1	
2 Career expectations ~similarities~		1				
29 self-managed career					1	
3 career externally managed	1		1	1	1	
31 serendipity	1		1	1		
34 upward mobility	1		1	1		
Orientation to the future						
6 dream	1			1		
13 goals	1		1	1		
22 planning the future ~high~					1	
23 planning the future ~low~	1		1	1		
Employability						
7 external employability	1		1	1	1	1
9 formal learning			1	1		
10 Functional external flexibility				1	1	1
11 Functional internal flexibility	1				1	1
49 (4 1) /attitudes to mobility ~location~/non positive			1			
50 (4 8) /attitudes to mobility ~location~/positive					1	
80 (11 1) /attitudes to mobility ~sector~/positive					1	1
81 (11 2) /attitudes to mobility ~sector~/non positive			1			
Self-employment						
20 Personal business					1	
46 (3 1) /self-employment/positive			1		1	
47 (3 2) /selfemployment/non positive	1		1	1		

Table VIII.3

Work information, employability and social identification measures by types of stories in a sample of interviewees

Stories of Self-recognition

Case	Age	Sector	Job tenure	Org. Tenure	ELMP	P IE	P EE	EO	EA	OI	PI	NOI
50	42	3	1	11	2	4	2,67	3,83	3	3,67	3,2	3,29

Stories of Progression

Case	Age	Sector	Job tenure	Org. Tenure	ELMP	P IE	P EE	EO	EA	OI	PI	NOI
80	41	3	3,5	9	2	4,67	4	4,33	3,83	4,17	3,17	4,29
38	46	3	1	14	1	3,67	3,33	3,67	3,83	4	4	4
86	44	2	10	17	2	3,67	3,33	3,83	3,5	3,5	4	3,71
82	44	3	10	10	2	4	2	4	3,67	3,67	3	2,71

Stories of self-development

Case	Age	Sector	Job tenure	Org. Tenure	ELMP	P IE	P EE	EO	EA	OI	PI	NOI
24	40	3	12	12	4	3,67	3,67	4,83	4,17	3,67	2,8	2,71
79	44	3	9	16	2	4,67	3,33	4,17	3,83	4,17	1,83	3,71

Stories of Adjustment

Case	Age	Sector	Job tenure	Org. Tenure	ELMP	P IE	P EE	EO	EA	OI	PI	NOI
76	39	2	3	13	2	4,67	3,33	4,33	3,33	4,17	3,5	3,86
27	42	1	6	6	8	4,33	4	4,33	4	3,33	3,8	3,43